



# THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION  
DEVOTED TO BORDER HISTORY

*Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.*

No. 48.

Price, Five Cents.

## BUFFALO BILL'S SECRET

OR  
THE TRAIL OF A TRAITOR



BY  
THE AUTHOR OF  
"BUFFALO BILL"

THE STEED OF THE INDIAN TUMBLED VIOLENTLY, CRUSHING HIS RIDER BENEATH HIM, WHILE OVER THE STILL PRAIRIE WENT THE TRIUMPHANT WARCRY OF BUFFALO BILL.





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## Buffalo Bill's Secret;

OR,

## THE TRAIL OF A TRAITOR.

By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE SCOUT TAKES THE CHANCES.

Alone in the vast solitude and silence of the prairie, alone with Nature, in the grayish gloom of a coming dawn, a horseman slowly rides along, his eyes fixed upon the eastern horizon, growing brighter as the moments fly away.

As the rosy hue of coming dawn brightened up the boundless prairie, the face and form of horse and rider became visible—a black broncho of much beauty and with every indication of great speed, while his rider, six feet in height, had a form denoting strength and activity, and a handsome, daring face that would win confidence, and was indicative of a determined will, a bold spirit and a generous heart.

Scarcely more than thirty years in appearance, there were yet lines about the firm mouth and around the corners of the eyes, with here and there

silver threads in his dark hair, which proved that he was older than he appeared.

He was attired in a full suit of dressed buckskin, ornamented with bead and quill work, and wore a belt containing three silver-mounted revolvers, and a long, keen knife in a leather sheath.

At his back was slung a short repeating rifle of new invention, and at his saddle-bow hung a keen little ax and a lariat.

Upon his head he wore a broad sombrero encircled by a cord, and his feet were incased in cavalry boots, the heels being armed with massive spurs.

He was one of those wandering men of the Western plains, hunter, guide, scout, or Indian fighter, according to circumstances.

As the daylight grew stronger, the horseman suddenly sprung to the ground, and a word to his faithful steed caused him to sink quickly and quietly down in the tall prairie grass.



A glance across the prairie had occasioned this sudden move on the part of the horseman, and a closer glance discerned, some miles away, a small cavalcade of half-a-dozen horsemen approaching at a sweeping gallop.

Constant solitude causes the Western hunter soon to learn to speak aloud when alone, as if addressing his thoughts to himself or to his steed; and thus it was with the horseman, who, after a closer inspection of the approaching cavalcade, exclaimed aloud:

"By Heavens! they are Indians! and in full pursuit of a fugitive—and the pursued is a woman!

"Be on the alert, old comrade, for the enemy is at hand!" and the scout affectionately patted the neck of his faithful steed, who in turn rubbed his nose against his master's shoulder.

Rapidly on came the pursued and pursuing, scarcely a hundred yards dividing them, the Indians riding close together, as though all their horses were of equal speed.

Glancing attentively at the horse in flight, the scout observed that it was a light-limbed gray, evidently unused to prairie life, for steadily the mustangs of the Indians were gaining upon him.

The rider of the gray was indeed a woman, or, rather, a young girl, scarcely more than eighteen, and at that distance the scout beheld that she had a yielding, graceful form, and a mass of golden hair flying in the wind.

"She has been taken from the settlements by those red devils, and in some way managed to elude their watchfulness and escape. Now, Comrade, it is time for us to act, for in a few moments more they will be upon us. Up, old fellow!"

With a bound Comrade was upon his feet, and nimbly springing into his saddle, the scout gave a wild and prolonged whoop, and dashed forth to meet the flying girl.

The effect of this sudden appearance was magical upon both the maiden and the Indians, for the former, at once recognized him as a paleface, urged her horse forward with redoubled earnestness, while consternation seemed to seize upon the redskins, who immediately drew rein, as if to hold a council of war.

The next instant the maiden dashed up to the side of the scout.

"Do not hesitate here, miss, but ride out of range,

while I have a little skirmish with those fellows," said the scout, gazing with admiration upon the face of the young girl.

"But you are in danger, sir," she softly returned.

"My life is always in danger, miss; but ride on please, for here come the devils."

Quickly obeying, the maiden once more urged her horse forward, and, halting at the distance of a few hundred yards, beheld the scout dashing swiftly on to meet the warriors, who, five in number, seemed surprised at the daring of the single horseman.

But the scout gave them no time for surprise, for, unslinging his rifle, he suddenly drew Comrade back upon his haunches, and once, twice, thrice rang the shots, and two redskins and one mustang were the victims.

In dismay the three remaining warriors turned to fly, the dismounted one endeavoring to catch one of the ponies of his dead companions, but, like the wind, the scout bore down upon him, and he was compelled to come to bay, at the same time uttering a cry for aid to the two flying warriors, and venting his war whoop of defiance against his paleface foe.

Quickly the rifle of the warrior went to his shoulder, a report followed, and, throwing up his arms, the scout reeled in his saddle, swayed violently from side to side, and then fell to the ground, while the trusty Comrade circled round him in a gallop, neighing wildly, as though in distress.

Instantly, yell after yell of triumph broke from the Indian warrior, as he dashed forward to scalp his foe, while his yells were echoed by his two companions, who wheeled to the right-about as soon as they saw their enemy fall, and came back with their ponies at their full speed.

With a groan of despair, the maiden wheeled her tired gray, and once more sped away in flight, almost every hope of escape having left her.

But suddenly she heard a shot behind her, followed by another and another, and wondering, she looked back to see the scout upon his feet, and only one Indian warrior visible. The Indian was clinging tightly to his swiftly-flying pony.

Then she saw the scout bound upon the back of Comrade, and away darted the black broncho in pursuit, his mighty bounds quickly overhauling his smaller rival.

A few moments more, and there was a circle around the scout's head; as he swung his lariat the



coil of rope was launched quickly forward, and the steed of the Indian tumbled violently to the ground, crushing his rider beneath him, while over the still prairie went forth the triumphant war cry of the paleface.

"Noble old Comrade! We got away with the whole of them, did we not?"

"You thought I had gone under, miss, and so decamped?" said the scout, politely raising his broad sombrero, to the girl who had ridden back.

"Yes, sir; but you are not hurt?"

"Not in the least; it was an old trick of mine to catch that fellow's companions, who were flying like mad across the prairie.

"Now, I am at your service to escort you back to the settlements, for doubtless you live there."

"Yes, sir, I am Nannie Verne, the daughter of the commandant of the fort."

"Indeed! It gives me great pleasure to have served Colonel Verne through his daughter."

After a short rest and a humble meal from the scout's haversack, the two set forth for the fort, distant some forty miles, and the maiden told her brave rescuer that she lived in the settlements with her aunt, a sister of her father, and that it was while on her way to the fort to visit her parent that she had suddenly been met by the Sioux warriors, who had made her a prisoner and hurried her away.

At night they had camped, and the next morning, just before day, when they were preparing to start, she had suddenly bounded away from them, with the determination to escape, believing that her gray horse could easily distance their Indian ponies.

For a while the gray had kept well ahead of their ponies, but, unaccustomed to a long run, they soon began to overhaul him, and her recapture would have been certain had she not unexpectedly met the scout.

"It was bold of the redskins to venture thus near the fort; but I think I understand their motive."

"And can I ask what it was?"

"Certainly; they knew you to be the daughter of the chief military commander on the border, and imagined they could bring your father to agree to their terms, ere they surrendered you."

"They would not have harmed me, then?"

"They would have slain you without mercy had Colonel Verne refused their requests."

"Then to you I owe my life, for I know my father

too well to feel that he would allow even his love for me to interfere with his duty; but I am a soldier's daughter, and would have died without fear; though it is a horrible thought to have to die so young, is it not, sir?"

"For years, Miss Verne, I have been, I may say, hand-to-hand with death, so that I have not the dread of it most persons feel. But what a joy it will be to your father and aunt to meet you once more?"

"Indeed it will!"

"Yonder comes a party of horsemen, and until we know whether they be friends or foes, it behooves us to be cautious," and drawing rein, the scout narrowly scanned a small cavalcade visible across the prairie, some miles distant.

After a close inspection, the scout continued, slowly:

"They are some forty in number, and—ha! they are soldiers, for the sun glitters upon their arms."

"Yes, I see them now myself, and——"

"And what, Miss Verne?" quietly asked the scout.

"And I will have to trouble you no longer, for they are doubtless my father's troopers."

"Would that I had never other trouble than you can give," said the scout, and then he continued: "Yes, they are a cavalry squadron, and they are following on the Indian trail; now they see us, and, listen, you can hear the troopers cheer, even at this distance."

Rapidly riding forward, the scout and Nannie Verne soon drew near the soldiers, who cheered lustily as they beheld the maiden no longer in the power of the red men.

At the head of the squadron rode a man of about fifty years of age, but most youthful of movement and appearance.

With a glad smile upon his soldierly face, Colonel Verne pressed forward, and the next moment affectionately saluted his daughter, who, after bowing kindly to two young officers at the head of the troop, and waving her hand to the soldiers, said quickly:

"Father, this is the gentleman who has saved my life, but I do not know his name."

The colonel turned toward the scout, who sat quietly on his horse, and said:

"My friend, I owe you a debt I can never repay except by a lasting friendship; but you are a stranger to me, for I cannot recall your face."



"I was on my way further into the Indian country, when I met Miss Verne, sir."

The colonel gazed at the man before him in surprise, for he saw in his face, bearing and conversation that he was no ordinary person, and his reply that he was going still further into a hostile country, and alone, caused him to feel some suspicion regarding him; so he replied:

"You certainly cannot intend pressing further into the savage country, for it is even unsafe for as small a body of troops as I have to penetrate this far from the fort, with the hostile tribes now going on the warpath all around us."

The scout smiled slightly, and answered:

"Those enemies whom I cannot defeat, Colonel Verne, Comrade can show a clean pair of heels to. I know this border, sir, from the Black Hills down to the Rio Grande, and it is to discover the intention of the redskins that I now enter their country."

"Are you a settler on the frontier, can I ask?"

"No, sir, I am a free rover of the prairies."

Colonel Verne had just been ordered to the Far West with his regiment, all new to frontier life, and he knew few of the characters there; but of many of the scouts of the line of forts he had heard, and now thought that he recognized the one before him.

"Pardon me, sir; are you not he that is called Buffalo Bill?" said one of the two officers—a handsome, dashing young captain, who had turned the heads of half the border belles, and was in turn desperately in love with Miss Verne.

"I am he that is called Buffalo Bill, Captain Ray," quietly returned the scout, and every eye was upon him, for, from the Missouri River to the Rocky Mountains the name had become known.

Certain it was, far and wide, he was known as the deadly foe of the Indians, who dreaded the very mention of his name.

"You are then Buffalo Bill?" said Colonel Verne, looking fixedly into the splendid face before him, while Nannie, with renewed interest, gazed upon him.

Without replying directly to the question, the scout returned:

"The Indians who stole your daughter, Colonel Verne, were picked warriors, under the renowned chief Big Wolf——"

"Say you so? I would give much to take that

red devil, for he has caused the whole frontier a world of trouble."

"He lies dead on the prairie, colonel, with four other braves who kidnaped Miss Verne," modestly returned the scout.

"What! Single-handed, you attacked five warriors, one of whom was Big Wolf, and defeated them? You are a marvelous man, scout!"

"Thank you, sir. Now, let me urge that you return to the fort, for hostile bands of redskins are about, and you do not wish an engagement in your present company," and the scout glanced in the direction of Nannie, and the colonel, catching his meaning, said:

"I will follow your advice. Again let me thank you for the service rendered, and believe me, the fort shall ever be a home to you. Good-by!"

Holding out his hand as he spoke, the scout grasped it warmly, and said:

"The result of my discoveries you shall know, colonel, but my word for it, the settlers should be thoroughly on their guard, for a storm cloud of war is soon to break along the border, the more terrible in its ferocity because renegades will be the leaders of the redskins."

"I had heard this hinted before."

"It is true, colonel; but between the frontier and danger, there will be one protecting arm you little dream of. Gentlemen, good-morning. Miss Verne, when next we meet, I trust you will have recovered from the fatigues of your rough ride."

Without another word, the scout raised his sombrero, bent low in his saddle, and with a word to Comrade, sped like a bird over the prairie, his course watched with interest by those he had left behind.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE WAR CLOUD.

The fort under the command of Colonel Verne was one of the most important outposts on the border, situated on the northern bank of the upper waters of the Arkansas.

The country around was most fertile, and adapted to cultivation and stock raising. For miles around the military post were scattered the humble homes of the bold pioneer settlers, many of whom were from the higher walks of life, whom loss of fortune had driven to seek the Far West.



As Colonel Verne had been once before the commander of an outpost, he had established for himself a cabin home, and surrounded it with many comforts, if not luxuries, and here was wont to pass his leisure hours, when military duty did not keep him at the fort, or fighting Indians.

His sister, a maiden lady of over thirty-five, was his housekeeper, and acted as a mother to his daughter; for the colonel had lost his wife eight years before.

It was a comfortable, cheerful Western home, for both the aunt and niece seemed perfectly happy, especially the latter, for she was the reigning belle of the plains, and every officer at the fort loved her dearly.

But Nan was considerable of a coquette, and even the handsome and dashing Captain Ramsey Ray could not settle in his own mind whether the little beauty really cared for him or not.

Returning in safety to her home after her capture by the redskins, Nan was welcomed with shouts of joy from all, and it was gratifying to her to see that all the young settlers were forming a band to start for her rescue, and the look of disappointment when they saw her return in safety, without their aid, she plainly detected.

Determined to be more guarded in the future, and alarmed by the words of the Prairie Prince, Buffalo Bill, Colonel Verne at once called a council of the settlers, and all arrangements were entered upon for strongly guarding the settlement from a surprise and an attack, and scouts were out on duty for miles around.

For ten days no sign of hostile Indians was visible, and the settlers were beginning to hope that the war cloud had blown over, when, suddenly, through the settlement dashed a horseman, his steed fairly flying over the ground as he sped toward the fort.

Silent and erect he sat in his saddle, uttering no word of warning, but pressing on, while from lip to lip went the words:

"That man is Buffalo Bill!"

Skimming along swiftly, the black mustang soon halted at the portal of the fort, and his master said:

"I would see Colonel Verne."

"Enter the cabin to the right, sir," politely answered the guard. The scout's knock upon the door was answered by a stern:

"Come in."

"Ha! my worthy friend, is it you? Welcome back." And the colonel warmly welcomed the scout.

"Thank you, sir—I have come as the bearer of important tidings—Miss Verne, good-evening," and the scout grasped the hand which the girl extended toward him.

"Say you so, scout? Is it a move of the tribes against us?"

The prairie prince glanced toward Nan, and the colonel, reading his look, said:

"Never mind, Nan; she is a soldier's daughter, and must listen unmoved to tales of war."

"Well, sir, I will make my report at once, for it is necessary to be on the alert. I penetrated as far as the hills without particular advantage, and, meeting with a friendly Indian, he led me, in disguise, into the village of the Sioux, where a council of chiefs belonging to the hostile tribes was being held.

"Believing me to be a renegade white, a sub-chief of one of the lower southern tribes, I was invited to the council lodge, and hence had every chance to discover the plans of the Indians."

"It was a daring undertaking, scout, and one I am rejoiced to see you well out of; but go on, you interest me greatly, and I declare, Nan is really quite pale at the thought of the danger you ran."

The scout's dark face flushed, and he continued:

"In that council lodge were the most famous warriors of the hostile tribes, and one man, a paleface, who is the instigator and leader of the whole movement."

"Indeed! and he is——"

"The man who has won the title of the Prairie Pirate."

"Ha! I half suspected your answer. Scout, I would give my commission to take that man alive," cried Colonel Verne, earnestly.

"And I would give my life if I could take his," sternly replied the scout, and in a tone so bitter and so deep that both Nan and her father started, for they felt that it was no ordinary hatred that caused Buffalo Bill to speak thus.

After a moment's hesitation the scout resumed:

"It is not the first time that the Prairie Pirate and myself have met, and it will not be the last!"

"With my hands tied, as it were, I was compelled to sit and listen to that man's diabolical harangue to the Indians, and hear him plot and plan to lay



the settlement in ashes, for he seemed to be a perfect fiend in his hatred of his own race.

"Narrowly he watched and questioned me regarding the lower tribes, and, though I could see that his suspicions were aroused, he had to be satisfied, as the Indian chief who presented me at the council was high in authority, and would not have his friend insulted."

"Strange that an Indian, knowing your true character, should have betrayed his own people."

"Not so, sir, when I tell you that my friend is a Comanche brave, one whose life I saved, and who followed me from the prairies of the far Southwest. Treated with kindness by the Sioux, he warned them of the coming attack of a hostile tribe, and for it was made a chief.

"He is friendly to me, and hence to the palefaces, against whom he will raise no hand in anger.

"But, to continue: The chiefs, headed by the Prairie Pirate, the renegade, agreed to raise the tomahawk along the whole border, pressing forward in large force toward the upper settlements, and, coming southward, continue their work of ruin and bloodshed.

"This was the plan of the white chief, who is to assemble his renegade band at the head of the Indians, and thus encourage them in their work of devilry."

"The white hound! Oh, if I can ever get him in my power! But when is this move to be made, scout?"

"Within the week, Colonel Verne, and I would advise you to at once throw your heaviest force toward the upper settlements, warn the whole line, draw in all your detached posts, and then, if you will trust me with a command, I will make a move toward the Indian villages in the hills that will soon bring the red devils back to protect their homes."

"You plan like a soldier, scout. Our enemies will be numerous, but we will be along the whole line. They will find us more than a match, even though they are headed by that renegade and his band; but how many men will you require?"

"I should like at least fifty troopers, and as many more of hunters, trappers, scouts and friendly Indians, whom I can collect in the settlement in half a day."

"This will give you a hundred men—a small force to penetrate thus far into the Indian country."

"We will make them think we are a thousand before we are done with them," said the scout, in a voice that caused both Nan and her father to laugh.

"You shall have the men, and pick them yourself."

"Thanks, colonel; then I will select, first, Captain Ramsey Ray," and the scout gazed furtively toward Nan, to catch the effect of his words; but that coy maiden did not even show a sign of having heard the name of the dashing young officer.

"You could not have a better man."

"Shall I call the orderly, father?"

"Yes—oh! here is Ray, now," and at that instant the young captain entered, his face beaming with pleasure as he beheld Nan.

In a few moments the colonel had made known to him all that the scout had said, and with delight the young officer learned that he was selected for the daring, nay desperate, duty of penetrating the Indian country, to draw off the attacking forces from the settlements by a war on their own camps.

"It is a mission that I accept, with thanks for the honor of selecting me, scout."

"I felt that you would be most willing. Now, captain, I leave to you the selection of your men and horses, for the former must be the bravest of the brave, and the latter swift, and with great powers of endurance.

"As to my portion of the command, I will select only those men whom I know have been tried, and are willing to die, if need be.

"Remember, the undertaking is one of terrible hardships and dangers, for we will have to penetrate the Indian country many long miles from any support. Our attacks will be made against Indian villages not wholly unprotected. When we have succeeded in drawing the redskins back to defend their homes, we will have to cut our way back through ten times our number."

"I understand the risks, and will accept them with pleasure. When shall we start?" replied Ramsey Ray, quietly.

"To-night I will start. The fourth night from this I will meet you and the command at the old ruined outpost just at the edge of the hill country.

"You will remember it, as it was there you fought Big Wolf and his warriors some two years ago."

"I remember it well, and will meet you there the fourth night from this. Shall I follow the southern



trail to get there, as the Indians will doubtless be scouting on the northern one?"

"Yes, and travel only by night—from dark to day-break, making your trips so as to get a motte to conceal you by day.

"If you see an Indian, let not one escape you, to give warning, and in an important mission of this kind, let me urge that the redskins are treacherous, slippery scamps."

The scout spoke sternly, and his three hearers felt that he was in deadly earnest.

"I understand; but can I ask why you go on ahead?"

"I desire to see this Prairie Pirate and his men start on their hellish expedition, and count their numbers. Then I will dispatch at once word to Colonel Verne, the number of the enemy, and the direction they take."

"Whom will you send, scout?" asked Colonel Verne, in surprise.

"One who has never deceived me, and one who has been my best friend and almost constant companion for years.

"When this ring is handed to you, you will know my messenger," and the scout held up to view a gold ring, fashioned after a snake with ruby eyes.

Within the ring was engraven:

The day will come.

"Now, I must go through the settlement, and hunt up my men; and, Colonel Verne, my horse needs rest; can I claim an animal from you for my ride?"

"My stables are at your service, scout," replied Colonel Verne, and, in a short while after, Cody departed in search of men for his band for the dangerous expedition he had so daringly determined upon.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE CABIN HOME IN THE HILLS.

Night had settled rudely down upon the earth, for the heavens were black with stormclouds, and the winds howled mournfully through the forests, driving great drops of rain into the face of a horseman as his noble steed struggled bravely forward, ascending, slowly but surely, a steep hill, heavily timbered by giant trees.

"On, on, my good fellow!" said the rider, and the

voice was that of Buffalo Bill, while Comrade, cheered by the voice of his master, pressed on with renewed vigor.

"A short mile further, old Comrade, and we will be safe from the storm. A dry shelter and good feed await," and, still further encouraged, the good steed struggled against the storm.

A few moments more, and beneath an overhanging cliff the scout suddenly turned into a narrow cañon, down which a torrent of water rushed, nearly knee deep.

Though the night was fearfully dark, Comrade seemed to understand his course, and, after a tramp of a quarter of a mile, entered the yawning mouth of a huge cavern in the face of the cliff on the right.

Here the scout dismounted, and, leading Comrade with one hand, while with the other he felt the side of the cavern wall, he walked slowly forward until he came out into an open space, surrounded on all sides by steep, tree-clad hills, impossible of ascent.

A shrill whistle, and at once a light glimmered before him, at a distance of fifty yards, and the form of a man was visible in the open doorway of a small but strongly-built cabin.

"Come, Wild Wolf, down with the bridge!" cried the scout, in a loud voice, and in a short time the person addressed advanced, bearing on his shoulders a heavy log, which he stood on one end and let fall across a deep chasm, some fifteen feet wide, that yawned between the cabin and the cave in the hill.

Two other similar pieces were then brought, and placed in position, and a flooring of roughly-hewn boards laid across, so that a frail bridge was manufactured across the chasm, and upon which the scout and Comrade crossed to the other side without a tremor of fear, although a misstep, or the breaking of the frail support, would have hurled them hundreds of feet below.

Leading his horse into one end of the cabin, the scout soon rubbed him dry, and gave him a good feed of dried grass, after which he entered the other apartment of the cabin, where his companion was busily engaged in preparing a substantial and tempting repast of buffalo meat, cornbread and strong coffee.

"Well, Wild Wolf, what news have you?" said the scout, taking his wet blanket from around him and seating himself near the blazing fire, while he addressed the Indian in the Comanche tongue.



The Indian was a tall, splendidly-formed warrior, with a wild and daring look upon his strongly-marked face, while, reaching to his waist, hung masses of raven-black hair, giving him a ferocious and untamed appearance.

He was dressed in buckskin leggins, hunting shirt, the bead-wrought belt around his waist being heavily fringed with scalp-locks, while he wore in his girdle a brace of revolvers, a long knife and tomahawk.

Around his neck hung a chain of human bones, bear and wolf claws, and as a charm, or pendant, was the grinning white skull of an infant, scarcely more than a few weeks old.

Such was Wild Wolf, once a Comanche chief, who, for saving from torture Buffalo Bill, who had once protected him, had been sentenced to the stake by his own tribe.

But the scout, whom he had rescued, would not see him die, and together they had escaped from the Indian village, and, wandering together northward, had ever remained firm friends.

Though Wild Wolf had been made a chief among the Sioux for warning them of an approaching attack of their enemies, he contented himself with the honor only of the name, and passed his days in the secret retreat in the hills where Buffalo Bill had established his home, in the very heart of a hostile country; and, strange to say, the connection of the Comanche warrior and the renowned Prairie Prince was never suspected, the Indians believing Wild Wolf always on the hunt.

Yet, though Wild Wolf had served the Sioux, it was through no love for them, but at the request of his white brother, the scout, who thought that the act might turn out to their future advantage, and many were the scalps that might be seen at his belt, that once adorned the heads of Sioux warriors.

The cabin in the hills was well concealed from discovery, and its position naturally defended. Its walls were decorated with the dressed skins of bear, deer, buffaloes, wolves and birds, while several rifles and pistols, with fishing tackle, adorned the space over the fireplace.

Next to the room occupied by the scout and Wild Wolf was a second apartment, wherein Comrade and Flying Horse, the steed of the Indian, found shelter. The back of the hut was against the cliff, wherein yawned the mouth of a large cave, which

led entirely through the hills to the lowlands beyond, and which afforded a means of escape, should an enemy advance in their front.

"Did the Wild Wolf do as his brother requested?" asked the scout, seating himself before the fire, and vigorously attacking the savory supper.

"The Wild Wolf never forgets; he saw the Sioux warriors depart for the settlements. At their head was the paleface chief and his braves," quietly responded the Indian.

"When did they depart?"

"When the sun went to sleep."

"That was five hours ago; well, the storm will delay them to-night, and it will be day after to-morrow before they strike the settlements."

"Now, Wild Wolf, tell me how many there were?"

"There were a thousand braves."

"Then they have left a stronger force behind than I expected they would; but this shall not deter me," said the scout, speaking more to himself than to his companion.

"Now, Wild Wolf, we must seek a few hours' rest, and then be off, for I wish you to put Flying Horse to his speed, and seek the home of the white warriors."

"Give the white chief this ring, and tell him all that he would know regarding the movements of the renegades and their red allies, and then hasten toward the northern settlements, and find the Indian band, and tell them that hundreds of paleface warriors are laying waste their villages, and slaying their squaws and pappooses."

"Where are the white braves?"

"They are not far from here, and I will lead them; when you have told the Indians that their homes are attacked, return here, and await me."

"Wild Wolf do all; go at once."

"No, let us take up our bridge first, seek a few hours' rest, and we will then depart through the cave leading to the lowlands."

"Wild Wolf understand," quietly responded the chief, and, shortly, after, the two friends were calmly sleeping away the midnight hours.

But ere daybreak they awoke, and when the sun rose it fell upon them many miles from the hills; the Indian, mounted upon his brown mustang, pressing on in a long swinging gallop toward the fort,



and Buffalo Bill directing his course toward the ruined outpost, where he was to meet Captain Ray and his daring band.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### THE MYSTERIOUS HORSEWOMAN.

The sun was yet some distance from the western horizon when the scout arrived at the motte, situated upon the banks of a small stream, and where, years before, a small outpost had been established, but which had met with a sad fate. Its occupants had all fallen beneath the tomahawk and scalping-knife of the red men.

Cautiously advancing into the timber, with his eyes searchingly invading every covert, and his nerves strung for action, should there be an enemy ambushed within, he soon felt assured that Captain Ray and his men had not yet arrived.

He was preparing to stake Comrade out to feed upon the luxuriant grass, and had removed his saddle to better rest him, when he heard the sound of something coming slowly through the underbrush, whether a buffalo, deer or an enemy he knew not.

Turning rapidly, he was about to replace his saddle, when a horse and rider dashed suddenly upon the scene. At the same moment the eyes of the scout and the stranger met, the former with a gaze of wondering surprise, the latter with a look of fear.

The scout had seized his rifle, and stood ready for action, but quickly was the weapon lowered, for before him, mounted upon a clean-limbed and thoroughbred-looking bay mare, was a young girl, scarcely eighteen years of age.

Her hair was black and long, hanging in massive braids down her back and resting on her horse.

Her eyes were exceedingly large, lustrous, and with long drooping lashes, while every feature was perfect, and the lips, slightly parted, showed the teeth white as pearls.

Her complexion was dark, browned still deeper by the wind and sun, and in her cheeks glowed the hue of perfect health.

She was attired in a closely-fitting riding habit of navy blue, trimmed with silver buttons; wore gauntlet gloves, and a light slouch hat, encircled by a silver cord, and shaded by a rich black ostrich feather, while her steed was equipped with a horse-hair bridle, immense silver bit, and saddle covered

with buckskin, ornamented with beads and quill-work.

Instinctively the scout raised his sombrero, and at this movement the lips of the beautiful maiden parted in a low order, her hand drew a silver-mounted pistol from a saddle-pocket, and away dashed the handsome mare, almost riding down the scout as she swept by.

"In Heaven's name, who is that girl?"

"What can she be doing here, alone on the prairie, and in an Indian country?"

"Doubtless she belongs to some wagon train, and is lost; but I remember of no emigrant train being expected here now.

"Who can she be? That's the question.

"At any rate, I'll never discover by remaining here; and yonder she goes like mad, across the prairie, doubtless believing me an enemy.

"Come, Comrade; we must give chase."

Bounding into his saddle, the next moment the scout was flying in full pursuit across the prairie, about three hundred yards behind the swiftly-running steed ridden by the maiden.

"Come, Comrade; yonder light-heeled nag shows you the road, a thing no other animal on the frontier can do. By Heaven! she is leaving us, old fellow! Come!" and the scout urged on his mustang, as, glancing behind her, the maiden was seen to suddenly cause her mare to quicken her speed.

"Well, well, well! Comrade, you are doing your best, and the bay still creeps away from you," and with a look of disappointment at the sinking sun, and remembering his appointment, Buffalo Bill applied the spurs to his horse, who, smarting with pain and rage at the unexpected treatment, bounded madly forward in pursuit.

But the bay slowly drew further and further ahead, until, after an hour's race, the scout reluctantly relinquished the attempt, and, wheeling Comrade to the right-about, once more headed for the motte, ever and anon glancing behind him, and observing that the maiden still continued her rapid flight, until ere long the horse and rider appeared a mere speck upon the prairie.

Surprising at meeting such a strange creature in the motte, and wondering at her remarkable appearance and conduct, Buffalo Bill searched every portion of the timber on foot for some clew to guide him in clearing up the mystery; but he at length gave



up the task as fruitless, and, after looking to the comfort of Comrade, threw himself down to rest, ere the coming of the band of troopers.

When he awoke, darkness was upon the prairie, and a long line of horsemen were visible, coming toward the timber. The scout recognized it as the military squadron.

Ten minutes more, and he had warmly greeted Captain Ray and his men, and, retiring into the deeper recesses of the timber, the whole party sought shelter within the ruined walls of the stockade, which concealed the light of the campfires.

With but little adventure, Captain Ray and his men had reached the motte, capturing and killing several Indians who had crossed their path.

The Prairie Prince then made known his sending Wild Wolf to the fort, with news of the departure of the Prairie Pirate and his red allies, and then he told of his mysterious adventure with the horsewoman in the motte; but Captain Ray could give him no information regarding her, and they appealed to the men.

All seemed very dark upon the subject, except one old trapper, who declared that he had seen the maiden, a year before. His description of her proved to the scout that he was telling the truth.

"I've heard tell on the gal more than once, Scout Bill; kase the Indians has told me that they has seed her, and they call her the Spirit of the Hills, kase you must know it's off yonder, some forty miles or more, was where I seed her; and they say she lives in the hill country; but you kin jist bet your bottom dollar she's no human gal, she nor the horse, nuther."

"Not as bad as that, Dave, I think; but I would like to know more of her, and I'll solve the mystery yet," said the scout, with determination.

It was then decided between Buffalo Bill and Captain Ray that they would encamp in the timber until dark, the following night, and that this delay would give the men and horses a chance for perfect rest for the arduous and dangerous duties before them.

Accordingly, sentinels were set, and the rest of the party were soon asleep.

The following day was spent by the men in cleaning up their firearms, looking to their horses, mending their equipments, and cooking rations for a week, after which duties they ate a substantial din-

ner, and betook themselves to sleep away the remaining hours until the moment for starting.

With the disappearance of the sun behind the western hills, the daring band filed slowly forth from their retreat, and, with Buffalo Bill and Captain Ray at their head, took up the trail for the Indian villages.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE RAID OF DEATH.

Over the dark prairie, at an easy canter, the daring band pressed on until, after midnight, they reached the rising land, and, under the guidance of the scout, penetrated into the forest. After three hours' more they drew rein at the head of a small valley.

"Now, we are within two miles of the large Sioux village of Chota, and we will rest and refresh ourselves and our horses until daybreak," said the scout, dismounting and setting the example.

"Captain Ray, the village below us numbers some two thousand souls, of whom doubtless two hundred are men able to fight us.

"Thus, my plan is for me to lead the advance with about thirty men, right into the village, while you follow, after a lapse of about ten minutes, with about thirty of your troopers.

"The remainder of the force can be divided into two parties, one under Trapper Dave, to strike at once for the cattle corral, to stampede all the ponies, and the other under Lieutenant Hardcastle, to act as a reserve.

"When Dave has stampeded the cattle, he can then come to our aid, and the lieutenant, following him, will cause a panic in the Indian camp, and cause them to believe our force much larger than it is.

"Also, let it be understood that we war only upon able-bodied men, and not upon women, children, and cripples, or the old."

"I agree with you; I detest this wholesale slaughter urged against the redskins, even though they are cruel savages.

"How long will you remain in the village, Scout Cody?"

"Not more than long enough to burn their village, and spread complete consternation, and then we will dash up to Cheo, ten miles further up the valley,



situated near a fall of the river, which will drown the noise of our attack here, and enable us to surprise them also.

"From Cheo we will take up position on the hills, and, after a rest, will ride through the lower valley, where there is an encampment of the Dog Soldier Sioux, and some Cheyennes, who have joined in the movement against the settlements.

"During the night we will encamp among the hills, and the following day sweep around upon the tribes who are encamped upon the border of the prairie and hill land, after which, under cover of the following night, we must beat a hasty retreat."

"A well-organized plan, and one which our daring and energy must carry through.

"Now, we will acquaint Hardcastle and Dave with the movements to be carried out, for already the eastern skies are getting gray."

A half-hour went by, and, divided into four parties, the command moved slowly down the valley, the detachment of the scouts, consisting of the scouts, trappers, hunters, and a few friendly Indians of the Pawnee tribe, in advance.

Unsuspecting evil, the village was lost in deep repose, excepting where, here and there, a firelight glimmered, proving that some early hunter was up, preparing his humble breakfast before starting on his hunt to provide food for his dusky family.

Silently and ominously the scout led his detachment on, until the first wigwams were near at hand; then, with a burst of prolonged and terrific war cries, they dashed into the village, spreading terror and consternation around them!

Panic-stricken, the red protectors of the camp rushed forth from their homes, to be shot down instantly, while the cries of frightened squaws and papposes rent the air.

Presently the torch was applied, and the flames began to make sad havoc with the village, while the shouts and shots of the party who had attacked the cattle corral were heard, mingled with the war whoops of the Indians and the battle-cries of the scout and his men.

In every direction then scattered hundreds of frightened mustangs, flying through the village, and spreading new terror among the Indians, while, dashing up with his force, Captain Ray joined in the carnival of death.

Upon all sides the red warriors fell in defense of

their homes, many of them unarmed, for in their confusion they could find no arms, and, believing their enemy ten times their real number, they fled in affright to the hillsides and forests, leaving their village in the possession of the palefaces.

"Now for one grand sweep of destruction, and then, before daylight is upon us, we will away for Cheo," cried the scout, who seemed to the men to be the very personification of courage.

After seeing him in battle, the reputation he had won did not surprise them.

Pushing through the village, the scout called a halt, and discovered that, though the enemy had lost scores of warriors killed, only half-a-dozen of his men were missing, and with a cheer at their success, away the band dashed up the valley, to carry the war to the village of Cheo.

As Buffalo Bill had said, the noise of a waterfall drowned the noise of their attack upon the village, and ere the surprised Indians were aware of the existence of a paleface within a hundred miles, the wild, ringing war whoop of the scout sent a thrill of horror and terror through many a redskin's heart.

"Give them no time to arm or rally, men! At them with a savage will!" cried Buffalo Bill, and a burst of war cries answered his words.

Death once more held high carnival in the home of the red man.

In the twinkling of an eye, almost, the village was in ruins, the ground strewn with red warriors, and hundreds of squaws and papposes flying for safety to the hills.

"We have no time to tarry, now, as the Dog Soldiers and the Cheyennes will be warned, and ready to meet us; so let us press our horses hard, and once more ride down the lower valley."

"All right, scout; you lead and we will follow. We lost five good men at Cheo. Now to avenge them, and their comrades who fell at Chota," replied Captain Ramsey Ray.

With a loud cheer, the destroying human whirlwind swept on, the horses dripping with foam, and covered with dust, but urged on for life or death.

Notwithstanding the alarm given by some of the fugitives from Cheo, the Dog Soldier Sioux were not prepared to meet their foes, but took safety in flight, leaving their village to fall into the hands of the whites.

A few brave warriors, however, determined to sell



their lives dearly, and the death of several troopers was the result; but in compact mass the band rushed on, and the Indian camp was a scene of desolation and death.

A village of savage Cheyennes then fell beneath the anger of the palefaces, the braves, driven to despair, fighting bravely for their homes and dropping a number of white horsemen from their saddles.

But the march of the attacking band was irresistible, and their track was one of ruin and bloodshed.

Having captured the village, the scout ordered a retreat to the hills near by, carrying back large quantities of Indian plunder loaded upon horses taken from the corrals.

Once in the hills, the party halted for rest, and the horses that were broken down were exchanged for the best mustangs captured from the Indians.

Night coming on, strong detachments of guards were stationed against surprise, for the scout thought that the Indians would attack them, if they could rally their different warriors in time.

But, excepting for a few stray shots, fired by some prowling brave, the night passed quietly away, and with the first glimmer of light the band moved off, to continue its work of ruin against the prairie border villages of the redskins.

Then the foresight of Buffalo Bill in ordering the shooting of all the mustangs that were not stampered was seen, for, although the Indians had assembled in large numbers to attack the whites, very few of them were mounted, and they could not follow upon their trail with sufficient speed to keep them in sight.

By noon the prairie was reached, and the bands of hunting Indians were attacked with irresistible force, before there was a chance for resistance, for they had never looked for danger from the palefaces in that direction, and, being miles distant from the villages of Chota and Cheo, they had not known of the ruin that had fallen upon them.

Another long day of carnage followed, and, satiated with their bloody work, the band of whites struck forward over the prairies, and with weary steps headed for the motte where in was situated the ruined outpost.

As the last rays of the setting sun fell from the summit of the distant hills, the scout glanced behind

him, and what he discovered proved that the greatest danger of the daring raid of death was yet to be met and overcome.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE FORLORN HOPE.

The sight that the scout discovered behind him was one calculated to make the stoutest heart quail, for, just setting forth from the base of the hills, was a confused mass of Indian warriors, some mounted, but mostly on foot, and directing their course upon the trail of the palefaces.

Fully outnumbered five to one by the Indians, and with his animals so jaded that they could scarcely be urged faster than a walk, the scout felt that they were compelled to halt for a night's rest in the motte, and that by morning the Indians would have come up and surrounded them. Their only way of escape would be to cut bravely through their lines.

"We are in a hot place, Captain Ray," laughed the scout, as he pointed toward the hills.

"Yes; but it is no worse than I expected; in fact, we have escaped well, with the loss of only twenty-five poor fellows; but it is owing to your dash and courage, scout, for we were upon the villages before they could resist.

"But what would you advise?"

"To seek the ruined stockade, and prepare ourselves for a fight, for the Indians may attack us to-night.

"If not, we will have had a good night's rest, and, thus refreshed, the horses will carry us bravely through their lines. There are too few of them mounted to cause us much trouble, once we get clear of the motte.

"Yet, infuriated as they are, they may attack us to-night, so we must hasten on, and set our house in order for the coming of our guests."

The scout spoke lightly of the danger, but all felt that it was very great, and, urging forward their tired steeds, the motte was soon reached, and ere darkness came on the band was strongly fortified in the old stockade.

Contrary to their expectations, the night passed quietly away, and the sun arose to discover no Indian visible.

But, creeping from the stockade, the scout bent his way to the edge of the motte, and, after an ab-



ence of half an hour, returned, his face showing no sign of discovery to their disadvantage.

"Well, Buffalo Bill, what have you seen?" asked Captain Ray, advancing toward him.

"That we have succeeded most thoroughly in this expedition, captain.

"First, my messenger had informed the Indians that went against the settlements that their own homes have been visited by the torch and sword, and out upon the prairie, only three miles, is the entire force of the Sioux, and their allies.

"Slowly they are arranging their plan to surround us in our stronghold. For us to attempt to cut through their lines will be certain death."

"What is to be done, then, Scout Cody?" coolly asked the young captain.

"I see but one plan, and that is to stand the siege."

"We have not a week's provisions, and with no chance of succor.

"Horseflesh is most palatable when one has nothing else.

"But you must stand the siege; the stockade is strong, you have tried men and true, and plenty of ammunition to beat back the entire force of redskins, if they were to storm you.

"In four days, or less, I can return with reinforcements from the fort——"

"You? How will you leave the motte?"

"I'll dash through their lines, which are not formed fully yet, and Comrade can carry me away from their fleetest horses."

"True, he showed no sign of fatigue yesterday, when all of the other horses were fagged out; but there are swift horses in the Prairie Pirate's band."

"The renegade and his men are not with the Indians; they have gone off on some other devilment."

"Now, I must be off; remember to keep the courage of the men up. In four days I will return with troops sufficient to give yonder redskins battle on a field of their own choice."

"I dislike to see you go, for it is a desperate gauntlet you have to run, and I fear evil may befall you."

"It cannot be helped; some one must go, for it is a forlorn hope, and I am best suited for the duty, knowing the country as I do, and having Comrade to sustain me in my trials, for his powers of endurance will be put to the severest test."

"It is a terrible risk to run, but something must

be done," said Captain Ray, as he walked with the scout toward his horse.

Comrade was as fresh as a lark, and, as if anticipating that some desperate service was expected of him, neighed wildly to be off.

A few moments more, and the scout, with determined and stern face, mounted, and shaking the hand of Ramsey Ray, rode from the stockade, followed by the good wishes of the band.

Following him to the edge of the motte, Captain Ray, Lieutenant Hardcastle and a few others saw at once the desperate gauntlet the scout had to run, for the prairie was alive with warriors, mounted and on foot, who were rapidly spreading a human chain around the piece of timber, including both sides of the small river or stream.

To the eastward was a space, half a mile wide, which was not protected, though there were two columns of Indians moving toward this point.

This open space was a good half-mile away, and the scout felt that he must ride like the wind to run through it before the two columns closed up.

Darting from under the shelter of the motte, Buffalo Bill urged Comrade on like a bird, and had advanced, fortunately, one-third of the distance before he was discovered. Then a yell of fury went up from a thousand red throats, as the daring horseman was seen, and his object known.

Rapidly the two columns began to close up, but one being of dismounted reds, the other made better progress.

Heading more toward the Indians on foot, Buffalo Bill, with his keen eye, at once took in the whole danger and chances of the case, and with word and gesture urged Comrade on, while he unslung his rifle and held it ready for action.

Becoming warmed to his work, Comrade crouched low upon the prairie, and fairly flew along, his speed surprising the Indians, and winning cheer after cheer from his friends on the motte, who breathlessly watched the rapid flight.

The whole scene was now one of wildest excitement, the Indians pouring in hundreds toward the point for which the scout, Buffalo Bill, was making, and filling the air with their terrible yells of hatred.

On, on, on bounded the noble horse; nearer and nearer the line he drew, and then only a few hundred yards divided them from the two hostile lines.

"Will he make it?"



"No; certain death stares him in the face."

"Too bad, too bad! Better to have remained, and fought it out with us."

"By heavens! that horse is fairly flying!"

"See! see! he will make it—he will! he will!"

Such were the cries from the men in the motte, as they narrowly watched the progress of the scout, and then a wild yell of joy burst out as they saw the Prairie Prince rush in between the two columns, his rifle flashing right and left upon his enemies, who were still two hundred yards distant.

Warrior after warrior fell, as the leaden hail was poured into the crowded ranks, but on they pressed, pouring in a shower of rifle bullets as they came.

As though bearing a charmed life, Buffalo Bill and his noble steed remained unhurt, dashing across the line, and with a yell from the scout that was heard at the motte, the flying steed bounded away upon the open prairie, followed by a hundred Indian horsemen.

Comrade was no ordinary steed, and his swift flight soon distanced the smaller mustangs of the warriors, and in an hour had left them far behind.

The horse and rider sped on, unhurt and safe.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE PRAIRIE PIRATES.

Upon the evening of the arrival of the Indian forces in front of the settlement, when the white renegade chief was planning his attack against his own race, there suddenly darted into the outlaw camp an Indian messenger, his horse showing signs of hard riding, and even his redskin rider exhibiting in his stern face a look of fatigue.

It was near the sunset hour, and the white chief and his red allies were holding a council of war beneath a huge tree, where they all had halted.

A steed, a large sorrel stallion, with a build denoting extraordinary strength and bottom, was grazing near by, loose, while his bridle accoutrements and a silver-mounted Mexican saddle, with its broad horns, lay at the base of the tree.

Leaning against the trunk of the tree, his arms folded upon his broad breast, and his whole attitude one of perfect ease and grace, was the man who had won the name of the Prairie Pirate.

Six feet in height, he was of magnificent build, and beneath the closely-fitting pants of dressed buckskin

and blue flannel shirt, his form gave indications of great strength, agility and powers of endurance.

Cavalry boots incased his feet, the tops reaching to his knees, and the heels armed with silver spurs, while upon his head he wore a soft gray felt hat, looped up upon the left side with a gold arrow, and with a black plume drooping over the brim.

A broad belt encircled his small waist, and upon either hip was a handsomely mounted revolver, while in front, and ready for the touch of either hand, were a bowie knife, and double-barreled pistols of exceedingly large bore and fine sight.

Hanging to the belt upon the left side, and attached by a red silk cord, was a small, gleaming battle-ax, with a long handle, a weapon which the chief had been known to use with terrible effect in battle.

His mouth was forbiddingly stern and cruel, the whole expression that of a man who feared neither God nor human being, and felt that he was an outcast upon the face of the earth.

Years before, the man had drifted upon the frontier, coming from the far southwest, as he said. There followed him a reckless band of a dozen followers at his heels, men like himself, devoting themselves to crime.

At first the chief devoted himself to the life of a highwayman, living in some secret recess of the forest, and demanding toll from all passers through his dominions.

Most courteous to women, whom he never robbed, and never taking more than a portion of his wealth from a man, he soon won the name of the Prairie Pirate.

But at last the military were on his path, the country became aroused at some more daring deed, and he was hunted down, and after a terrible struggle made prisoner, but not until he had shot three soldiers dead, and was himself severely wounded.

He was tried at once by a military court and sentenced to be hung as soon as he recovered from his wounds, but the night previous to the day appointed for his execution he escaped from his log prison, and the next morning the sentinel who guarded him was found dead before the door, without any mark of violence upon him, while upon his face remained a look of mortal terror, as though some unearthly visitant had appeared before him.

A year passed away, after the escape of the out-



law of the prairies, and then he suddenly reappeared on the border at the head of a formidable band of renegades, and from that day his cruelties toward his fellowmen seemed to know no bounds, for the armed and the defenseless everywhere fell beneath his deadly hatred.

Such was the Prairie Pirate, and any one gazing into his face, as he leaned with folded arms against the tree, listening to the war talk of the Indian chiefs, Brave Shield, Big Whistle and Tall Bull, could not help but feel that his dark and handsome face hid beneath its cruel mask some deep and damning mystery of crime and lost honor.

"The chiefs talk like women, and would chatter for hours, like a gang of old women at a tea-drinking.

"Let them hold on to their rattling tongues, lest the birds of the woods understand them, and carry the tidings of our coming to the settlers," and the renegade spoke in a stern and sneering voice.

"What will our white brother have?" sulkily returned Brave Shield.

"I would have you get your red cutthroats ready to march upon the settlement at the coming of dark; let the whole band follow in my lead, and I will redden the prairies with the blood of the palefaces," savagely returned the white chief.

"The great chief speaks well, and his red brothers shall fringe their belts with paleface scalps, and fill their wigwams with paleface squaws," said Tall Bull.

"You lay your accursed and bloody paws upon the head or form of a white woman, and I will tear with my own hands your scalp from your head," replied the white chief, his eyes flashing fire.

Instantly the Indian warriors were upon their feet, their hands upon their weapons, but, undismayed, the Prairie Pirate stood before them, an evil glitter in his eye.

"What! has our white brother turned traitor?" asked Big Whistle, after a pause.

"I will never be a traitor to a woman, even though I practice hellish barbarities upon men.

"No, you red devils, I lead you against the settlements to kill and make captive the men, and to carry off what plunder you can; but, so help me the Great Spirit! if one woman or child dies by the hands of a redskin, intentionally, I'll turn my renegade bloodhounds upon you, and aid the white warriors in driving you to your haunts."

The Prairie Pirate spoke in a tone that proved he was in a deadly mood. Evil looks were going the rounds of the Indian faces, and a storm was threatening, when suddenly a horseman dashed swiftly into the midst of the party.

"Ha! what brings the Comanche Wild Wolf here now, when he skulked to the prairies when we took to the warpath?" tauntingly said the white chief.

"The Wild Wolf is no skulking dog; he has been on the warpath of the paleface warriors, and has come to tell his red brothers that the braves from the fort are now laying in ashes their happy villages in the hills."

A yell of terror, of rage and despair, went up from the assembled chiefs at this news, but the stern voice of the Prairie Pirate checked their cries.

"Who is it, my red brothers, that brings this news? It is the stranger chief, the Comanche dog, a friend of the palefaces. The Comanche lies."

With a yell of fury, the Wild Wolf threw himself from the back of his steed, and rushed upon the chief, his knife glittering in his hand.

But a dozen strong arms seized and held him back, and, powerless, he cried:

"Red brothers, the tongue of the Wild Wolf is not crooked; he speaks straight. If my red brothers doubt the Wild Wolf, let them bear him back a prisoner, and then burn him at the stake."

The words and manner of the Comanche carried conviction with them, and again almost inhuman yells filled the air, while in hot haste the Indians began to mount, no longer thinking of attacking the settlements while their own homes and families were in danger.

In vain the Prairie Pirate pleaded with them to continue on, and devastate the settlements; his words were unheeded, and in a short while the whole band of warriors departed, leaving the angry and disappointed Prairie Pirate alone with his squadron of renegades.

But, undaunted by the desertion of his allies, the daring chief determined to himself strike a blow against the settlements, and, with what plunder he could secure, start back to his stronghold in the hills, distant nearly two days' journey from the fort.

With this determination, he called his men around him, and made known his intended plans, and at



nightfall the band was upon the move, slowly approaching the homes of the hardy pioneers of the frontier.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### CAPTURED.

After having successfully and unhurt run the gauntlet of his foes, Buffalo Bill continued on for several hours, ere he drew rein to give Comrade a rest.

But the mustang was a wiry animal of remarkable endurance, and a few hours served to refresh him greatly, and with renewed vigor he continued at an easy gait, through the long hours of the night, when he again made a long halt for food and rest in a small motte where the grass grew luxuriantly, and where there was a spring of clear, cold water.

Having looked to the wants of Comrade, rubbed him down thoroughly, and staked him out to feed upon the juicy grass, the scout broiled some jerked buffalo meat upon the coals, and, spreading his blanket, lay down to rest, and hours passed ere he awoke.

Once more he mounted, and again Comrade's powers were put to the test, and with such good results that the walls of the fort came in sight before sunset. Just at twilight he dashed into the stockade citadel, and was welcomed by a loud cheer from the soldiers.

But at a glance, Buffalo Bill discovered that some important event had transpired, for all was excitement and confusion, and he feared that perhaps Colonel Verne had lost his life in the battle with the Indians, for whether Wild Wolf had reached the band before they had attacked the upper settlements he was not aware.

His fears upon that score quickly vanished when an orderly came to conduct him to Colonel Verne.

The commandant sat in his private room, his face pale, and terribly stern.

"Well, what of your expedition?" he said, as the scout entered.

"It was a raid of death, sir, for we destroyed every Indian village in hills, and more than double our own number in warriors were slain, with only the loss of twenty-five men, seventeen of whom were soldiers."

"A good report; you have done nobly; but where is Ray?"

"Besieged in the ruined outpost, colonel, for we were followed closely by the Indians, and, with our horses broken down, were compelled to rest for the night. In the morning we beheld not only our foes of the day before, but the bands of Tall Bull, Big Whistle, Brave Shield and other chiefs around us. They had returned to defend their homes."

"Your Indian messenger did his duty well, then; he came to me with your message, and then hastened on, and instantly the Indians returned to defend their villages. I greatly feared for the safety of you all.

"But you say Captain Ray and seventy-five men are besieged in the old outpost?"

"Yes, sir."

"It was impossible to cut through the fifteen hundred warriors surrounding us, and I advised the captain to remain and fight it out, while I came on to the fort for aid."

"And you broke through the line, which seventy-five men dared not risk?"

"I ride a horse, colonel, that has few equals, and broke the line almost before the Indians knew of my intentions," modestly returned the scout. Then he continued:

"Captain Ray has four days' rations, plenty of ammunition, and a band of brave men, and can doubtless keep the Indians at bay until aid reaches him, and it was for succor that I now have come."

"You shall have it, my friend; three companies shall start at once, and I would spare more, but I have to head a squadron myself, to start on a duty of the greatest importance. My daughter is now a prisoner in the hands of that renegade hound, Prairie Pirate."

The strong voice of the man trembled with emotion.

"Miss Verne a captive of the Prairie Pirate!

"This is indeed sad tidings; but how did it happen, colonel?" said the scout, deeply moved by the news.

"Well your messenger, Wild Wolf, it seems, succeeded in sending the Indians back to their hills, but the bloodthirsty monster would not return without leaving his mark, and finding out in some way that I was ready for him in the fort. He made a detour, and by night dashed into our lines, and car-



ried off poor Nan. After this act he was away, ere the slightest resistance could be offered."

"When did this happen, colonel?"

"Last night, just before daybreak; I was up in the settlements, and returned not one hour before you did."

"He has, then, at once gone to his stronghold in the hills; two days' hard riding will take him there, and he has now but a day's start. Cheer up, colonel; call out all your men that you intended for your expedition, and, with those to go to aid Captain Ray, we will at once start, for the outpost is almost on the trail to the stronghold of the outlaw, and after we have relieved the gallant captain we will decide what is best to be done."

"My friend, you give me hope, and it shall be as as you say; but once the Prairie Pirate was sentenced to death, so that I dread he will take a terrible revenge upon me, now that he has the power; and, were we to reach his stronghold, I fear he would slay poor Nan ere I could recover her."

"Then, colonel, leave it to me, and I pledge you that I will rescue Miss Verne; will you trust me?"

"Certainly; and if any man can do it, you are the one."

"But, come, you need rest and food ere we leave, so I will order supper. Throw yourself upon my bed, and take a nap."

"I am like my horse, colonel; a short rest and a good meal causes us both to feel as good as new."

"Comrade is now under the tender mercies of your negro groom, and three hours will be all the rest he will need. It is now seven o'clock, so please have the men ready by ten."

So saying, the scout threw himself upon the colonel's couch, and almost instantly was fast asleep, to awake at the appointed hour, partake of a hearty meal, and, at the head of three hundred troopers, under the leadership of Colonel Verne, ride forth to the aid of the besieged band in the ruined outpost on the river.

## CHAPTER IX.

### RAISING THE INDIAN SIEGE.

True to his word to Captain Ray, the scout was but a few miles from the outpost on the evening of the fourth day.

Having made charge after charge upon the whites,

and with no successful results to themselves, the Indians had laid a regular siege to the gallant band, intending to pick off, with their arrows and rifles, every man they could by day or night, so that, by thus reducing the defending force, they could, in the end, make one grand charge, and wipe out the whites.

Well knowing that the scout would bring relief for the outpost, they still believed that it would be a week ere he could possibly return, and then only with a comparatively small force. They thought that, as the settlements were threatened, he could not get many men to accompany him. Their own large number rendered them exceedingly brave.

But they had not counted on the power of endurance and speed of Comrade, for the dash and determination of the troopers, and upon the fourth day they were little dreading an attack from any quarter, when suddenly, with a round of hearty cheers, the cavalry were upon them.

Depending on their large number for protection, they had stationed no sentinels, so they were completely taken by surprise.

Right and left rode the gallant troopers, their rifles and revolvers cracking, and sabers falling with terrible execution. They appeared in the darkness to be a far larger force than they were. The Indian warriors were seized with a panic, and broke in wild confusion, followed hither and thither in their flight by the victorious troopers.

Then into the motte dashed the scout, Colonel Verne, and his escort, and loud and long were the cheers that went up from the stockade when they greeted their friends. The defenders of the little fort dragged Buffalo Bill from his horse, and bore him around on their shoulders in triumph.

"Well, captain, I kept my word, and, thank God! I was able to do so," modestly said the scout.

"We certainly thank God that you were, my friend, for I have lost forty men killed and wounded—the end would have been a massacre; but how you must have ridden!" and Ramsey Ray warmly grasped the scout's hand.

"Colonel Verne," said Cody, turning to that officer, "the Indians have fled to their ruined villages, to protect their families, for they evidently believe your force double what it is, and think you are coming after them."

"Now, men fight with desperation around their



hearthstones, and thus would the redskins fight were you to attack them. It would be madness on your part to attack them again."

"What would you suggest, scout?"

"That you return with your command at once to the fort——"

"Pardon me, but have you forgotten that my daughter is a captive in the hands of that wicked man?" said Colonel Verne.

"No, sir, it is in my mind, and my advice is offered after mature thought on my part. Return to the fort with your men, and you will thereby gain a good start before the Indians know your intentions, for if they were to follow you on your retreat, many a brave soldier would lose his life.

"Regarding the release of Miss Verne, were you to follow on to the stronghold of Prairie Pirate, certain defeat would be the result, for the Indians would take your trail, and you would be between two fires. It is impossible for three thousand men, even, to attack the outlaw's stronghold with success; what strategy can do is another matter.

"In disguise, I have visited the outlaws' stronghold, and I know it as well as does its chief, and therefore I am capable of acting with my eyes open.

"Leave all to me, return to the fort, and keep a close watch against surprise. Allow me to seek the robber stronghold, and I will rescue your daughter from captivity.

"Will you place full faith in me, Colonel Verne?"

"Scout Cody, you are a marvelous man, and, I believe, will accomplish what you promise. I trust you, and will do as you wish, but for God's sake save my poor Nan, for a father begs it of you to save his child."

"I have promised," replied the scout, and a few moments after he was hard at work, rubbing down his faithful steed and companion, and feeding him upon the most luxuriant grass that could be found.

A substantial supper, a sleep of an hour, and Buffalo Bill moved out from the motte with the returning troopers, but once upon the prairie, he bade farewell to Colonel Verne and his companions, and set forth alone, to soon disappear in the darkness, bound upon the hazardous mission of rescuing from the outlaw stronghold Nan Verne, and, strange as it may seem, there were none in that band who for a moment doubted that his adventure would be crowned with success.

The scout had never been known to fail in anything which he had undertaken.

With somewhat quieted mind, both Colonel Verne and Captain Ramsey Ray set forth upon their return to the fort.

## CHAPTER X.

### WITHIN THE PIRATE'S STRONGHOLD.

When the Prairie Pirate had determined upon his course regarding the settlements, he started at once to carry out his plan, but was warned by the arrival of an Indian scout that the upper settlement in the valley was prepared to resist him.

Instantly his orders to move rang out, quick and strong.

Making a large detour from the settlement, he suddenly darted, at the speed of his horses, in the direction of the fort, and in the stillness and darkness of the night dashed within the line of settlers' homes, and pounced upon the home of Colonel Verne.

Awakened from a sound sleep, Nan and her aunt suddenly discovered the tall form of the outlaw leader before them, and heard his stern order:

"Miss Verne, you will dress with great haste, and accompany me."

In vain were the offers of bribes and earnest entreaties. Nan Verne was compelled to obey and, with trembling hands and blanched face, dressed herself in her riding habit. The next moment she was riding by the side of the chief, as he sped away, followed by his band, fully a hundred in number.

It was a hard and cruel ride of three days, and none but a sturdy girl could have borne the fatigue; but Nan kept up bravely, and upon the evening of the third day following her capture, the hill country was reached, and in a deep recess in the hills was found the robber encampment.

Rude in construction, hidden away in a lovely valley, defended on one side by lofty and impassable highlands, and upon the other by a mighty flowing stream, the robber retreat was yet more picturesque, and the beauty of the scenery could not but charm Nan, worn out and sorrowful, though she was.

Humble cabins, skin wigwams, and a few tents scattered along the river bank, composed the homes of the renegade crew, and the women and children who followed their fortunes, and who were almost



as wicked as the men. In a like dell, under the shadow of the highlands, with a lawn sloping down to the banks of a tiny stream, was a spacious and comfortable cabin, the home of the chief. Hither was poor Nan borne.

With surprise, as she entered the cabin home, she noted the comforts about her, the humble but easy furniture, the clean flooring, neat walls adorned with crayon or water-color sketches, and a guitar lying near a window which opened out upon a wide piazza, around which clung vines, evidently trained to grow there by some one of refined taste.

Across the hallway from the room into which the chief had ushered Nan, was another room, which appeared like a dining-hall, while back of it were two bed chambers, as the maiden could see through the open doors, the linen in which was white and clean.

Surprised at all she saw about her, Nan turned and glanced timidly into the face of the man, who, with all his crimes, had certainly treated her with marked respect, and, seeing her look, he said, quietly:

"Miss Verne, here shall be your home until I decide regarding your future fate, and no one shall intrude upon you; yes, one will be your companion, whom you will not, I hope, object to, and your wishes shall be attended to by my servants.

"Make yourself at home, please, even though you are under the roof of the outlaw chief called the Prairie Pirate."

With a bow the chief departed, and Nan was left to brood over her sorrows alone, and to worry her mind with devising some means to escape from her thralldom.

"I must escape from here, or ruin will be my fate."

"Have no fear of evil, for you are safe," said a sweet voice near at hand, and, turning quickly, Nan beheld before her a young girl who had silently entered the room.

"Thank you, for those words, for you would not deceive a helpless girl!" cried Nan, and, springing forward, she buried her face on the young girl's shoulder—for at last her strong will had broken down, and she was no longer the proud, defiant woman she had been in the presence of the robber chief.

Upon the afternoon following the arrival of Nan in the stronghold and near the sunset hour, a horseman was slowly wending his way in the direction of the robber retreat.

His horse seemed tired out and travel-stained, and the rider wore a look of fatigue, as though he had journeyed many long, weary miles.

The form of the horseman was tall and manly, though the effect was destroyed beneath the humble garb of a Roman Catholic priest, and in spite of the heat of the sun he wore the cap of his order.

The face of the priest was clean-shaven, and the hair was cut short, but, notwithstanding, every feature was good, and, in the expression of the eyes and mouth, there was a look of fearlessness and determination which the sanctity of his calling had not wholly destroyed.

Upon the front of his worn saddle was a revolver and knife, ready to protect life in case of necessity, and behind the saddle was a blanket and leather roll containing provisions and his book of prayers.

Following the plain trail leading to the hills, the priest soon came upon a small stream, where his horse halted for water, just as the sound of hoofs were heard, and up dashed a steed and rider.

With surprise the priest beheld a young girl, well mounted and apparently a thorough horsewoman, for, upon discovering him, she wheeled her steed to the right-about, as if to escape from danger; but, discovering at a glance his peaceful calling, she halted and advanced slowly toward him, saying in strangely sweet tones:

"Holy father, at first your presence startled me; but now I fear you not."

"Thanks, my daughter; I would not willingly cause one so pure and good as you look, to fear me.

"I am a humble follower of the Master, and am seeking to convert the heathen in this God-forsaken land; but what do you here?"

"I live further up the valley, and thither you must accompany me; for, even in our rude camp, there are those who will be glad to see you and have you confess their sins, for they are indeed sinful."

"Daughter, it is my duty to go where I can be of service to my fellow-creatures.

"I will accompany you."

Side by side the two rode on together, and ere the sun sank to rest behind the hills, they arrived in the robber camp.

Leading the way directly to the cabin of the chief, they soon arrived in front of the door, and the maiden called out to the Prairie Pirate, who was seated upon the piazza indolently smoking a pipe.



"Father, I have brought a guest home with me."

"In God's name, Maud, whom have you there?" somewhat angrily asked the chief, rising and aiding the maiden to alight.

"I have one who will be a vision of comfort to many poor souls in this camp who desire to confess their evil deeds."

"Always doing some act to incur my displeasure, child."

"No, sir; I have done nothing to cause you to speak thus. This worthy priest I found by the brook and brought home with me.

"Father Foley, this is my father, the chief of the outlaw band, and the man who was known as the Prairie Pirate."

"I have heard of you, my son, and of your wicked career; but, as there was repentance for the thief on the cross, so may there——"

"Listen, priest! you come here as my daughter's guest, and I will respect the pledge; but I warn you to keep your preaching for ears better attuned to it than are mine.

"Dismount, sir, and your wants shall be attended to, and, my word for it, you will not refuse a good glass of brandy that I can offer you?"

"A little wine for the stomach's sake, my son, is good——"

"Yes, and for your stomach's sake you men of the cloth will go a great way. Come, my man, dismount, and together we will have many a social chat, but, mind you, none of your doctrines for me, for I am outlawed by God and man, and want none of them.

"Here, Henderson, take the priest's horse, and see that he is cared for, and let the men and women know that we have a lamb in our flock of wolves, should they wish to get absolution for their sins, and thus, with the record rubbed out, commence anew to burn, pillage and murder."

Speaking thus bitterly, the chief strode away, while the maiden whom the chief called Maud led the priest into the house and set before him a hearty

supper, which the holy father partook of with evident relish.

A week passed away, and still the worthy priest lingered at the robber camp, and he had become a great favorite with all who went to him for comfort.

With the chief, Father Foley had little to do, having informed him that the church sent him out among the savages, and that he had roamed for years among the tribes.

"You certainly have not run loose among the tribes of my acquaintance, my worthy disciple, or they would have raised the hair off your head, short as it is, if they would have had to apply to the Indian agency for tweezers to pull it off with.

"Why, man, they would scalp you and think no more of it than your cloth do of mingling their prayers with the whisky."

After this conversation, Father Foley seemed to shun the chief, who was really constantly engaged in the duties of his command.

But what surprised the priest most was the presence of Maud in that robber retreat, and her calling the chief by the sacred name of father.

That she was his daughter was evident, for there was a strong likeness between them, only the maiden's face wore none of the stern and hard expressions that flitted across her parent's, and her life seemed one of perfect purity.

True, she seemed sad at times, for she keenly felt her father's terrible life and the dangers he ran daily, but then she was ever affectionate and cheerful before him, and seemed the silver lining upon his clouded existence, the single ray of sunlight that entered his gloomy heart—for he was wholly wrapped up in his beautiful daughter, whom he had taught himself in various branches of education until Maud was a refined, intelligent and accomplished young girl.

Was it a wonder, then, that the priest felt a deep interest in the maiden, and still lingered at the stronghold, anxious to win the fair young girl from



her cruel associations, and cause her father to allow her to seek a home in the society which she could adorn.

## CHAPTER XI.

## THE RESCUE.

Ten days after the arrival of the priest in the robber camp, three persons were seated upon horseback upon the side of a small hill, gazing upon the prairie spread out before them with almost boundless expanse.

Two of the party were maidens—one of them Maud, the robber chief's daughter, the other Nan, the captive.

The third person was the priest, Father Foley, who was allowed every privilege in the camp, and had accompanied the young ladies for a ride upon the prairie.

After gazing in silence upon the level landscape for a while, the priest turned to Maud and said, quietly:

"Lady, I have to thank you for more kindness than I can ever repay, but you will have your own reward.

"Through your kindness I have been received in the robber camp of your father, and thereby enabled to accomplish the object for which I came here.

"Listen, while I tell you why I came here, and make known to you that I have deceived you, for I am not what I seem."

Surprise was visible upon the beautiful face of Maud, but she merely bowed for the priest to continue, and said nothing.

A slight flush overspread the face of Father Foley, and he resumed in the same soft voice in which he had spoken before:

"Many miles from here there lives a man who is your father's enemy—an enemy because, in the discharge of his military duties, he, years ago, condemned your parent to die for his crimes. Pardon me, but I must speak plainly.

"That foe of your father has a pleasant home, al-

most within the shadow of the post, and there dwelt his sister and daughter in peace and happiness, until the renowned Prairie Pirate swooped down upon the dovecote in revenge, and bore the maiden away, his intention being to revenge himself upon the force of the commandant of the fort by putting the maiden to death."

"Could my father do so foul a deed? He never wars against women," indignantly replied the maiden.

"True, he has that redeeming trait, but he is bitter in his love for revenge, and the life of Miss Verne was to be sacrificed to avenge himself upon the father for having once condemned him to die upon the gallows, and from which ignominious doom he was rescued."

"How know you this, Father Foley?"

"I know that last night your father gave the order for the murder of Miss Verne, and that her scalp was to be sent to the post."

"Horrible! This shall not be done, sir—you have my word for it," replied Maud, her face paling and her eyes flashing fire.

"Lady, I know your influence is great, but I prefer not to risk it.

"I said that I was deceiving you, and in truth I am, for I am no priest!"

"What! who then are you?" cried Maud, in amazement.

"I am one whom you have met before, one who gave chase to you some days since, when we met in that motte to the southward."

"You are, then, that man? Well, I distanced you, did I not, though your horse was a fleet one? But how you are disguised!"

"It would not be safe for Buffalo Bill to visit this spot."

"Buffalo Bill? You, then are that man?"

Then she quickly continued:

"But what danger you are in here! Quick! fly, ere my father knows you in your true light."

"Lady, I pledged my word to Colonel Verne to



rescue his daughter, and I came hither for that purpose, and Miss Verne has known me in my true light since the first night I arrived, for her woman's eyes penetrated a disguise which none of the band have done, though they have often met me.

"When I asked you to ride hither this afternoon it was for the purpose of escaping with Miss Verne; but let me urge that you also come with us, for, sooner or later, the end must come, and you will be cast helpless upon the world."

"Yes, Maud, let me beg you to come with us, and be my sister, and my father will be a father to you.

"No one need know that you are the daughter of the renowned Prairie Pirate, for my father will return East if I wish it, and then he will have two daughters, instead of one.

"Come, Maud, come with me," and Nan put her arms around her beautiful companion, who trembled, while great tears stood in her eyes.

"No, I will not be tempted. I will remain. I long dearly to see the great world beyond, to meet my fellowmen and women whose brows are not branded with crime, but I owe my first duty to my father.

"Whatever he may be to others—cold and stern though is his nature—to me he has been ever kind, and I know I am all he has to love in the world.

"I am glad that we have met, Nan, and you, sir, I can never forget, but I must stay here with my father.

"Quick! hasten! you have no time to lose, if you would keep ahead of the human bloodhounds that before long will be on your trail; so, fly at once; and, Nan, take my mare; she is the fleetest on the prairies, and the scout rides one that has few equals, so you can have a better chance to escape; no, no, do not say me no, but change horses with me at once," and the noble girl sprang to the ground.

"It is best, Miss Verne," replied the disguised scout, and he instantly set about changing the saddles and bridles upon the horses, while the two maidens seemed almost heartbroken at parting—

Maud, because her friend, whom she had learned to love so dearly, was perhaps forever going from her, and Nan, to have to leave behind amid a robbers' camp the beautiful girl whom she so longed to have go with her.

"Miss Maud, now we must part."

It was the scout who spoke, and, before the maiden could answer, she suddenly started back, her face paling and her lips parting with:

"All is lost! See, there comes my father!"

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## CHAPTER XII.

### AVENGED.

It was too true! Slowly coming around the base of the hill, and some two hundred yards distant, was the Prairie Pirate, following the trail leading to his retreat in the hills.

As the eyes of all three were upon the form of the robber chief, there suddenly came the sharp crack of a rifle from some unseen foe, and throwing his arms wildly in the air, the outlaw reeled from his saddle and fell heavily to the ground.

The war cry that followed was echoed by a wild scream from Maud, and together the three dashed down the hill toward the fallen man.

But suddenly from a dark covert in the hillside darted a tall and wild-looking form. With the speed of an antelope it rushed toward the prostrate chief.

"Great God! it is Wild Wolf!" cried the scout, and he drove the spurs into Comrade and urged him on, at the same time calling out to the Indian.

But, wrapped in the joy of his revenge, the Indian warrior neither saw nor heard—his victim only was before him.

"God in Heaven! he will scalp him before the eyes of his daughter!" cried the scout, and he half drew his revolver from its holster; but, as if altering his determination, he urged Comrade on, and the next instant, bounding to the ground, seized Wild Wolf as he was bending over the man to take his scalp.



"Hold, Wild Wolf! I bid you hold!" sternly cried the scout, as the Indian seemed inclined to still rush upon the wounded chief.

"Wild Wolf has killed the hound of the prairies; let him take his scalp!"

"No, yonder comes the daughter of this man, and she shall see him die in peace, for you have taken his life.

"Will you yield this to me, or shall the knife be drawn between us?" and the scout spoke with deadly firmness.

"Wild Wolf has no knife for the heart of his white brother.

"The great white chief, Buffalo Bill, must not be angry with his red brother."

"You are then in disguise? I now see who you are—you dare do anything, Buffalo Bill."

"It was the deep voice of the robber chief, and quickly the scout turned toward him.

"Yes, chief, I came here in the guise of a priest to take from your power the daughter of Colonel Verne; but here comes your poor daughter, and she will explain everything," replied the scout, and up dashed Maud, followed by Nan.

"My father! Oh, God! he is dying!" and Maud threw herself beside him.

"Yes, Maud, I am dying; I feel that my moments are numbered."

"And here stands your murderer——"

"Hold, lady! yonder man has but avenged himself for a wrong done him in days gone by; nay, put up your pistol, for he is my friend, and I will not see him harmed."

The scout spoke firmly, and, glancing into his face, he relinquished her hold upon the weapon she had drawn from her belt, and again knelt beside her father.

"Maud, daughter, I have been to you a cruel father, for I have reared you here amid wild scenes of carnage; but I feel that you will forgive me, and, when you hear my confession, you will think kindly of me."

"Father, oh, father, who else have I to love?"

"Oh, God! must he be taken from me thus, and I left alone in all the world?"

"Maud, long years ago, ere you were born, I was an innocent man—a wild youth, perhaps, but still not sinful.

"Then across my life there came a cloud, a damning cloud—for, betrayed by one I thought most true, one of kindred blood, we fought, and he fell by my hand.

"But there my sorrows only began, for my act cast me out from a mother's love—nay, from the affection of every human being save one, and her I learned to love with my whole heart.

"That one, Maud, was your mother, who, when I first met her, was engaged to another, who would have made her life happy had I not darkened her path.

"Finding I was disinherited by my mother, and with no one to speak a kind word for me, I intended turning my back upon my home, when I discovered I was loved by your mother, and I could not leave without her to guide my wandering footsteps through life.

"But, alas! more bloodshed fell to my lot, for the man to whom she was engaged sought me out, challenged me, and we met upon the fatal field of honor.

"He fell by my hand, and before I could reach the spot where he lay bleeding, a horseman dashed up and furiously attacked me.

"It was the brother of your mother, Maud.

"In vain it was that I warned him off, and, to keep him at bay, shot his horse; he rushed upon me, firing as he came, and, in self-defense, I shot him through the heart. But with me went the woman of my love, your mother, Maud.

"Hunted down for the crimes I had committed, I fled to Mexico, and became a wanderer.

"I came to roam this portion of the country, where your mother, ever true to me, followed with you, then a mere child.

"One night the military visited my house, accom-



panied by a band of settlers, and, in the skirmish which followed, for I would not submit tamely, your mother was killed.

"From that day I became a very devil, and well you know my career since."

The chief paused.

"I forgive you much, Mark Travers, though you did kill my best friend. To avenge him I have tracked you to your death."

"Who are you, man?"

"Buffalo Bill."

"I know that much; but your real name?"

"William F. Cody."

"And why have you tracked me to doom?"

"I but now told you—to avenge a dear friend, to whom I owed much, and who told me of his life and yours," said the scout, sternly.

"And who was that friend, Buffalo Bill, for whose sake you so hated me, for such friendship among men nowadays is very rare?" and the dying man seemed to hang breathlessly upon the name to fall from the scout's lips.

"His name was Roy Percy, and I found him dying by your hand, for he was not dead when you left him, as you supposed him to be.

"I carried him to my camp, and he lingered for days, and told me all.

"Mark Travers, you are dying, and your sands of life are well-nigh run out, and this child will be alone in the world.

"Leave her in our charge, and in the family of Colonel Verne she will find a home," said Buffalo Bill.

"Child," said the Prairie Pirate, turning to Maud, "I have not a half-hour to live; already clouds of death pass before my eyes, and I feel—that—but you forgive me, do you not? My child, you forgive your erring father; but do not—do not forget him—even though he was a cruel outlaw of the border.

"Here, child, take my hand, and——"

The eyes were closed from view, the strong form trembled, a sigh parted the stern lips, and the man

whose life had been one long scene of crime ceased to breathe.

Then Maud said, quickly:

"You must not remain here an instant——"

"You will go with us, Maud, you must!" said Nan.

A moment the outlaw's daughter hesitated, and then she said, firmly:

"I will go!

"This is no place for me now.

"I will take my father's horse, for he is as fleet as the wind.

"When we get well on our way, I will turn loose the animal you rode, Nan, and he will alarm the stronghold, and they will find my father's body.

"I am ready."

She turned and kissed the dead face once more, leaped lightly to her saddle, which the scout had transferred to her father's splendid horse, and Buffalo Bill crossed the arms upon the dead breast of the chief, called to Wild Wolf to get his animal from where he had left it and follow, for the pace would be a hot one, and the trail was a long one.

It was three days' hard ride to the fort, for the scout spared the girls all that he could; but the trip was made in safety. The soldiers went wild with delight when Buffalo Bill returned with Nan, and also another young girl, Wild Wolf bringing up the rear.

"You have kept your pledge, Cody," said the colonel, turning from greeting his daughter to the scout.

"I am glad that, with Miss Nan's aid, I was also able to rescue a fair captive from the stronghold," said Buffalo Bill, in a tone that all heard, adding:

"This lady is Miss Maud LeRoy, Colonel Verne, and she comes from the Southwest country."

"And more than welcome you are, Miss LeRoy," said the colonel, who, when he had heard from Nan, and the fair outlaw as well, the true story as to who she was, said:

"You shall be as my own child, Maud."

"And I do not come poor, sir, for my mother's



costly jewels, worth a fortune, are deposited in my name in a bank. I have the receipt for them with me, with other things of value never left out of my keeping."

"Thank God! it is all over now, and there is some prospect that our lives may glide quietly along in the future," said Colonel Verne.

"To you, Buffalo Bill, I owe more than I can ever repay, for you have saved me my child, who is far dearer to me than life itself.

"Now, Cody, I wish you to meet my sister, Miss Verne, whose early life was also clouded, causing her to leave gay society, and accompany me to this far frontier, where she has been a mother to Nan—oh, here she comes now."

As the colonel spoke, a lady entered the room—a lady with a sad face that had once been beautiful.

"Lida, I sent for you on account of joyous news—but, in God's name, what ails you?"

"Brother, from Nan I have heard all, and that the Pirate of the Border was Mark Travers, the man who killed his cousin Howard, to whom I was engaged, you remember?"

"Yes, I recall vividly that sad affair; but, Lida, this is my friend, Buffalo Bill, who has won such a wonderful reputation, and whose daring has restored to us our lost Nan."

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A few days' rest at the fort, and Buffalo Bill and Captain Ray started on another expedition, accompanied by a large force of troopers.

It was against the stronghold of the robber band, who, in the continued absence of their chief, for they knew not of his death, had been thrown into disorder and strife.

Taking advantage of his thorough knowledge of the surroundings, the scout led the column slowly to a night attack. The surprise and defeat of the renegade robbers was thorough, and their band was scattered to the four winds of the prairie.

Returning by way of the Indian village, the dashing band inflicted another severe punishment upon

the hostile tribes, who at once became anxious to sue for peace with the whites—a peace which was soon after entered upon, but like all treaties between the redmen and palefaces, only kept until some trifling circumstances called them to dig up the tomahawk once more.

Returning to the fort, Buffalo Bill received a warm welcome from Maud, who closely questioned him regarding every feature of the stronghold which had so long been her home, and, with tears in her eyes, thanked him sincerely when he told her that he had transferred her father's body to her favorite little dell near the cabin, and had marked the grave with an engraved headboard, containing his real name and date of death.

For his gallant service Ramsey Ray was promoted to the rank of major, and further made happy by discovering that he was really loved by that sad little coquette, Nan Verne, who had given him so many heartaches.

"And now, Cody, I must get you an appointment as an officer in the army," Colonel Verne remarked.

But Buffalo Bill declined, with thanks, a commission, but went to the fort as chief of scouts, Wild Wolf remaining as his "red pard," while Colonel Verne went East with Nan and his adopted daughter, who got her mother's treasure from the bank where it had lain so long, and also received the fortune to which she was the heir.

Six months later, Major Ramsey went East, and Nan became his wife.

Thus ended Buffalo Bill's Trail of a Traitor.

THE END.

Next week's issue (No. 49) will contain "Buffalo Bill's Phantom Hunt; or, The Gold Guide of Colorado Cañon." After his long trail of a traitor you may think that the great scout needed a long rest. But he was soon on the path again. His phantom hunt was a long and thrilling one.





# THRILLING ADVENTURE



Hair-raisers—that's what we are getting in this contest. Thrilling stories of every kind.

You are doing magnificent work, boys—keep it up. If you have been in a previous contest and have not won a prize don't let that discourage you. Remember it's the boy with grit enough to keep on trying that wins. Full particulars of the contest on page 28.

## Our First Two Nights in the Forest.

(By W. A. Young, Ohio.)

I was visiting my cousin in Wisconsin. My cousin asked me if I wouldn't like to go on a hunting trip.

"Yes," I replied. "It's a wonder we didn't think of this before."

We took a train to the nearest station, and walked the remaining eight miles, which was a tiresome trip, for we had a load of grub, blankets, etc.

Reaching an old lodging camp that had been deserted some time previous, which afforded a good place to stay, we built a fire, and soon had things booming in our cabin.

The first night passed, and we found everything all right the next morning. Not getting anything we returned, and found the cabin door open.

"Say," exclaimed Bob, "something has taken all our grub."

"All but a loaf of bread!" I cried.

We had to make the best of it, but were curious to know what it was. I took the bucket, and went after some water, but as I started to return I heard something growl.

"Good Heaven!" I gasped, "it's a panther."

I started to run, thinking probably I could reach the cabin before it would overtake me. Finding that was useless, I climbed a small tree near by, just in time. I yelled for Bob, who came running out of the shanty.

"Hello!" he shouted, "what's the matter? What is that—a panther?"

"Yes," I gasped. "Get a rifle, quick!"

He wasn't long getting a rifle.

Taking aim at its heart, he fired. It turned toward him, but fell over dead.

"That was a close call," says my friend.

"Yes," I cried. "I don't want to be called that way."

"Well, I'm glad you killed it the first time, for if you had only wounded it you would have had some fun yourself."

"Yes," he answered, "I knew that."

"By the way," he asked, after we had eaten our bread, "were you scared very much?"

"Yes," I answered, "I thought I could feel my hair turning gray."

We crawled into our bunks, but a strong wind was blowing from the Northwest. The snow was sifting through the cracks, in the shanty. I could not sleep, for my nerves were all unstrung, and the howling of the wind made the cold chills run up my spinal column.

About midnight I heard something at the cabin door.

"Bob," I cried, "there is something at the door."

We got our guns ready, just as a rush was made against the door, which gave just enough to make our hair stand on end.

We fired through the door. That was the last that we heard that night. But I didn't care to venture out till morning. The next morning we saw blood on the snow. This ended our adventures in the backwoods.

## Under the Ice.

(By Grover C. Brindley, Ia.)

My chum and I were walking down the street and he said to me:

"Get your skates and I'll get mine and we'll go skating."

I said "All right," and soon we had our skates and were on our way to the river.

We reached the river in a short time. We soon had our skates on. We took hold of hands and started out. We had not gone very far when the ice broke and we both went down.

I let go my chum's hands and he did the same thing as I did.

I went down over my head, but I soon started up again. But I did not come up through the same hole I had gone down in. I did not know which way the hole was. I began to think of everything I had ever done wrong.

I thought of trying to find the hole I had gone down in. I got turned over with my face down, and that was the last I knew until I came to my senses at home. My chum was there, and he told me he had caught hold of the ice and pulled himself out of the water on solid ice. He called for help and then got a long board that was lying close by and laid it on the thin ice, so it did not break.

Then he broke a hole in the ice over me and caught hold of me.

## Peril On a Freight Train.

(By James Scott, Mich.)

One noon, as I was walking home from school, I saw that a freight train blocked my passage. I was anxious to get home, and attempted to go between two of the cars. I had my hands on two rounds of the ladder on the car and my feet on the bumpers when the train started with a jerk, and I fell with my legs across the track.

I felt as though I would have to go through the rest of my life on crutches. I jerked my feet out just in time, but the wheel passed over the hem of my trouser leg and I went home minus a part of my trousers.



## A Dangerous Sleigh Ride.

(By Howard Wanson, L. I.)

In the year 1893, when I was only six years old, my parents bought me a little knee sleigh. It was two or three days after Christmas when I started for the hill with my sleigh, the snow was about a foot deep and had a crust on it an inch or two thick.

Well, I got upon the hill. I turned my sleigh toward the base and got on and started to descend at lightning speed.

When I was about three-quarters of the way down I looked up and saw I was running into a rail fence. My heart leaped into my throat and I almost rolled off my sleigh.

I was within twenty yards of the fence when I heard my father call to me to roll off, but I didn't. I kept right on, and a great number of neighbors thought that it was my doom. But just as I got within three feet of the fence I struck a bump and jumped right through between the rails, sleigh and all.

As soon as I stopped my sleigh I grabbed the rope and ran home as fast as my legs would carry me. I was a scared youngster.

## An Elevator Story.

(By Jas. B., Md.)

About a year ago I was working in a factory running an elevator from the basement to the fourth floor. As it happened this day a friend of mine was running with me.

I got off at the second floor while he went on up to the top. I sat with my feet through the floor waiting for him to return. I fell into a doze, and the first thing I knew I was lying home in bed with two physicians by my bedside.

After I got well they told me that the elevator had come down on my legs and nearly cut them off.

If it had not been for my friend's presence of mind I would not have had legs now.

## The Two Bears.

(By Chas. Clark, New York.)

I am about to tell you of an adventure I had with two good-sized grizzly bears, in the Adirondack Mountains.

We had two guides, Running Bear and War Cloud.

We were walking through some woods one day when our party became separated, I being left alone with one of our guides, War Cloud.

War Cloud and I had just finished our lunch when he suddenly turned and saw two grizzly bears creeping up on us. We fired our guns and wounded both bears, when they charged us before we could reload, and compelled us to use our knives. We used our knives to such good advantage that we killed one bear. The guide, after killing his enemy came to help me, but he fell and struck his head on a rock, killing himself.

After I had been fighting my antagonist for about fifteen minutes I thought my time to die had come, for I was completely exhausted, when, all of a sudden, there came the sharp cracks of half-a-dozen rifles, and the bear dropped dead.

I looked to see who had fired the shots, and saw the rest of our party coming toward me. When everything was right again we buried the dead guide, and started for the camp, carrying with us the two bears.

When we reached our camp I fainted from loss of blood. My comrades got a doctor, who fixed me up fine.

A week later I took a train for New York, hoping never to go through such an ordeal again.

## A Storm on the Potomac.

(By Leroy Freeman, Washington, D. C.)

Several men, my father and I went up the Potomac River one Sunday for a day's fishing. We hired a rowboat at the boathouse, and rowed out in the channel so as to catch some channel catfish. The current was very strong there, and our two anchors were hardly sufficient to keep our boat from

drifting down stream. Suddenly the river became choppy and the sky began to darken.

My father suggested to us to row in near the shore, so if the wind or waves got too high we could easily reach the boathouse in safety. We had hardly pulled in our lines and anchors when the wind howled and shrieked about, for the storm had burst upon us with terrible fury.

The light boat began to toss up and down, now high, now low. I often afterward wondered how we escaped from that terrible storm. Oars were of little use in that gale.

We were a little below the boathouse, so we had to make our way up the river, facing the wind and tide, while the hail stung like a yellow jacket. The rain and hail formed a veil, so we could not see very far ahead.

All of a sudden one of the men who was with us shouted above the din of the wind and waves:

"My God, Frank! (my father's name) pull your port oar for all you are worth. There's rocks in our course."

Through the mist a number of rocks loomed in our course. I gave myself up as lost, and was thinking about my chances to hang on to the rocks until help would come.

But, thank God! I had no opportunity to try this. With a mighty effort, my father bringing all his strength into play, forced the boat slowly but surely away from the rocks. Soon the other man shipped the other pair of oars.

When the storm broke my father told him to take one of his oars and steer, so we gradually drew nearer and nearer to our destination, the boathouse.

After battling with the elements for about ten minutes we safely reached the boathouse. If ever I felt glad to reach a boathouse, I was at that minute. We thanked our Deliverer from our hearts in silence.

A man who owned our rowboat said that he thought we were gone sure, and that he was going to launch a boat to pick us up.

## Running a Car Off.

(By Urban S. Boyle.)

When I was seven years old my home was situated near the Erie Railroad, and the depot was not more than fifty rods away. From the first time I went there with my father I had always possessed a desire to listen to the clicking of the telegraph instrument, thinking sometimes I could read the messages it clicked off.

One evening in the early autumn my father consented to let me go to the depot with my friend, Donald Rogers. He was sent for an express package that was coming on the evening train, and as we had a long time to wait, after listening to the telegraph instruments, off we went to play on the box cars that were on the siding, and the old saying, "Boys will be boys wherever they may be," was the truth here, for in a few moments we were on top of the cars, running and jumping about.

Presently Donald got down, picked up an iron rod that lay near the car, told me to let off the brakes, and before I knew what he was doing the car commenced to move. I was on top. Imagine the thoughts that whirled in my brain. I tried to speak, but my tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of my mouth.

What to do? I ran from one end to the other, going through all kinds of motions. At last I concluded to jump, and jump I did. It rather scared Donald, but I was not hurt. Thinking the fun over, he tried to stop the car, but, alas! too late. He then jumped also. We ran and crawled into the sewer that conveyed the water from the depot spring. The car was almost to the "spur," which separated the switch from the main line. It would soon run off. Then we noticed the water was cold and the sewer small. We were in a tight place all around.

Crash!

The car had run off. My heart was in my mouth. The people came out and after seeing the cause went back.

I was soon home; as for Donald, whether he got the package I do not know.

For weeks I was kept hidden, and every stranger I saw I was told was a detective after me.

I am fast becoming an operator, but have never tried to run any more cars off the track.



## A Treacherous Saddle.

(By Ralph Rausch, Ind.)

My uncle owned a three-year-old colt. She was a very fast and frisky horse, and took a good deal to hold her back.

One Sunday afternoon not having anything to do I asked my uncle if I might take a ride.

He said I could, so I got her out and started toward the depot. Just as I started to turn back another boy came galloping around the corner to ride along with me, but he frightened my horse. Then began a lively race, but my mare left him far behind. We were going a-flying when all at once I felt the saddle slipping, and the next thing I knew I was on the ground. My foot remained in the stirrup long enough to get my face and head bruised. Some friends took me in their house and bathed my face, while the mare was racing down the street with the saddle flopping under her, and was found in the stable. I had a scar on my face for a good while, and was laughed at a lot. Had my foot caught in the stirrup I would have fared worse.

## Over a Cliff.

(By William Harrington, Mass.)

One summer a friend and myself thought we would like to go hunting, so we started for the mountains which an old huntsman told us of. The first day we arrived we took in the eastern part of the mountain. The next day we decided to go north. When we had traveled a short distance we found we had to cross a deep gorge about seven feet wide, and about one hundred feet deep and filled with sharp rocks.

My friend got across all right, but I noticed that the board on which we had to cross it was rather shaky.

When I was almost over the board split and I fell, but just as I did I caught a root, and it held me.

I was so fatigued and shaken up that I was just going to fall to death when my friend caught my hand and pulled me up. When I came to I found a doctor at my head, and I am mighty glad it was not an undertaker.

## Racing with a Fast Train.

(By Arthur Jones, Kansas.)

Southeast of my grandfather's house and across a large pasture lies the track of the main line of the Rock Island Railroad, and its trestle crossing about thirty feet high.

I had just been presented with a new shotgun and was very proud of it. I had been gone all day and shot at every small animal I saw, but not being used to a gun, I had not touched a thing—only dirt. Time passed quickly, and I was not a bit discouraged, but having made up my mind to go home I walked down the track. I soon came to the trestle, and started across carrying my gun at full cock. I was almost across when I heard a whistle and turning around beheld the swiftly approaching passenger train. I could not let myself down as the ties were too close together—to have dropped would have been death.

These calculations took but a moment. I must run for the end.

Dashing forward, I ran with might and main, it being down grade. The train approached with fearful rapidity, the roar deafened me, and I was wild with fright. I was almost to the end now, and the train close behind.

Dropping the gun, I jumped for the stone abutment. The gun went off with a bang, but I could hardly hear it. The train was within five feet of me. I could not stop myself, but went rolling off the abutment and down the hill. I never knew how close the shot came to me.

## ANOTHER PRIZE CONTEST! MORE THRILLING ADVENTURES

**SPALDING CATCHERS' MITTS, INFELDERS' GLOVES, BASEBALL BAT  
AND LONG DISTANCE MEGAPHONES ARE THE PRIZES THIS TIME.**

### HERE IS THE PLAN

You know what exciting stories of hairbreath escapes and thrilling experiences you have been reading in the *BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY* lately. You want to read more like them, don't you? Well, send them in. You have a splendid chance for the splendid prizes we offer in this contest. You have all had some narrow escape. Some dangerous adventure in your lives. Write it up just as it happened.

We offer a handsome prize for the most exciting and best written anecdote sent us by any reader of *BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY*. Incident, of course, must relate to something that happened to the writer himself, and it must also be strictly true. It makes no difference how short the articles are, but no contribution must be longer than 500 words.

### THIS CONTEST WILL CLOSE MAY 1

Send in your anecdotes, boys. We are going to publish all of the best ones during the progress of the contest.

#### HERE ARE THE PRIZES:

**THE THREE BOYS WHO SEND US THE BEST ANECDOTES** will each receive a first-class Spalding Catcher's Mitt. Made throughout of a specially tanned and selected buckskin, strong and durable, soft and pliable and extra well padded. Has patent lace back.

**THE THREE BOYS WHO SEND THE NEXT BEST ANECDOTES** will each receive a Spalding's Infelder's Glove. Made throughout of selected velvet tanned buckskin, lined and correctly padded with finest felt. Highest quality of workmanship throughout.

**THE TEN BOYS WHO SEND THE NEXT BEST ANECDOTES** will each receive an A1 Spalding League Baseball Bat. Made of the very best selected second growth white ash timber, grown on high land. No swamp ash is used in making these bats. Absolutely the best bat made.

**THE TEN BOYS WHO SEND US THE NEXT BEST ANECDOTES** will each receive a Spalding 12-inch "Long Distance" Megaphone. Made of fireboard, capable of carrying the sound of a human voice one mile, and in some instances, two miles. More fun than a barrel of monkeys.

**TO BECOME A CONTESTANT FOR THESE PRIZES** cut out the Anecdote Contest Coupon, printed herewith, fill it out properly and send it to *BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY*, care of Street & Smith, 238 William St., New York City, together with your anecdote. No anecdote will be considered that does not have this coupon accompanying it.

#### Coupon Buffalo Bill Weekly Anecdote Contest

**PRIZE CONTEST NO. 3.**

Date .....

Name .....

City or Town .....

State .....

Title of Anecdote .....



# BOYHOODS OF FAMOUS MEN.

This department contains each week the story of the early career of some celebrated American. Watch for these stories and read them, boys. They are of the most fascinating interest.

Those already published are: No. 1—Buffalo Bill; No. 2—Kit Carson; No. 3—Texas Jack; No. 4—Col. Daniel Boone; Nos. 5 and 6—David Crockett; No. 7—General Sam Houston; Nos. 8 and 9—Lewis Wetzel; Nos. 10 and 11—Capt. John Smith; No. 12—Wild Bill; No. 13—Dr. Frank Powell, the Surgeon Scout; No. 14—Buckskin Sam; No. 15—Seneca Adams ("Old Grizzly" Adams); No. 16—Pony Bob (Bob Haslam); No. 17—Major John M. Burke (Arizona Jack); No. 18—Kit Carson, Jr.; No. 19—Charles Emmett (Dashing Charlie); No. 20—Alf Slade; No. 21—Arizona Charlie (Charlie Meadows); No. 22—Yellow Hair, the White Boy Chief (William Burgess); No. 23—Broncho Billy (William Powell); No. 24—Squaw-Man Jack (John Nelson); No. 25—Major Lamar Fontaine (the Sharpshooter King).

## No. 26—BUCK TAYLOR, (KING OF THE COWBOYS.)

Buck Taylor was born on a Texas ranch, and from his earliest boyhood could ride a bucking broncho, shoot a rifle and revolver, throw a lariat and follow a trail.

His greatest delight was to ride a Texas steer, and though he got many a bad fall, he never was seriously hurt.

As he grew in years, he became a powerful fellow, and few men could handle him when he was but fifteen years of age.

He was utterly fearless, would back down at no danger, and in the Indian wars had shown himself a dandy in a fight and on the trail.

Once when but fifteen he was sent to the nearest town, four days' ride away, to get some money to buy cattle with.

He got the money late in the afternoon, hid it away, and started home, stopping a score of miles away for the night at a ranch.

He was told he could have shelter, but he did not like the man or his surroundings.

At night he put his money under his pillow, bolted the door and went to bed, his revolver in his hand.

He felt anxious, as a rough-looking man he had seen in town that day also came to the ranch and asked to stay all night, while he seemed to know the landlord.

Worn out, though he tried hard to keep awake, he dropped off to sleep, after securely bolting the door. He had slept several hours when he was awakened by deep breathing, and after listening became convinced that it was some one in the next room to him.

He had almost dropped off to sleep again when he was startled by something touching him, and instantly he cried out:

"Who is there?"

There was a sudden blow on the pillow near him, and then a grip at his throat; but just then his pistol flashed, and with a loud cry, the midnight intruder started back, and fell heavily upon the floor.

The shot alarmed the house, and there came a banging on the door, which Buck hastily opened, and in dashed the landlord, light in hand.

Upon the floor lay the form of the intended assassin, and his hand still grasped a knife, the blade of which was driven an inch deep in the floor.

A trap door in the ceiling was open, and a rope ladder was hanging from it into the room, showing the way in which the man had entered.

As the landlord turned the body over Buck saw that his bullet had entered the assassin's brain.

But he also saw that it was the man he had seen the day before, and he felt less compunction for his act, for he knew he had followed him to rob and kill him.

"Boy, you have killed one of my guests who unfortunately walks in his sleep, and had entered your room with harmless intentions, for he wouldn't hurt a dove," said the landlord, savagely.

"No, he wouldn't now, I admit," replied Buck.

"None of your smartness, boy, for I won't have it, and in this room I will lock you with poor Dave until the constable comes for you to-morrow, and I'm thinking you'll swing for it."

Buck tried to impress upon the landlord, as did several others, that the man had entered his room knife in hand, in the dark, and the boy also told of his following him; but the landlord would not listen, and, taking Buck's arms and saddlebags, left the room, securely locking the door behind him.

Thus was the poor boy left alone in the dark with the man he had killed, alone, friendless, and threatened with the gallows for an act where he knew he had but done his duty to save his life.

At first, when alone with the dead, Buck felt his position most keenly, and could not suppress the shudder and horror that would creep over him.

But in a very short time he began to plot an escape, for he was not a boy to give up without a struggle, and having taken human life he saw the gallows rising before him in spite of the darkness.

Just then the office clock twanged forth one, and he arose from the bed upon which he had seated himself, and moved in the direction of the door.

With all his caution to avoid the dead body, he stumbled over it, and arose to his feet almost unnerved.

But his nerve returned to him, and he felt at the lock of the door.



It was a bolt shot into an iron socket, which was fastened on by heavy screws.

But in his pocket Buck had a penknife that would just suit for the work of removing the screws, he thought.

By hard work one screw was removed at last, the iron socket was drawn aside, and Buck was free from his prison.

The room in which he had been confined was on the third floor, and he cautiously descended to the lower floor, and through a crack in the floor saw that he was opposite the bar-room.

A fire flickered on the hearth, a dog lay lazily before it, and all was quiet within.

Buck would have gone out through another door, which he knew opened out into the yard; but through a crack in the panel he caught sight of his rifle, pistol and saddlebags lying on the landlord's desk, and he was determined to secure these if he had to fight the dog.

Opening the door, he entered softly, and at once the dog woke from his nap, and seeing a stranger growled.

This would not do, for the landlord must be sleeping near, and Buck tried to coax the brute, but found his persuasive powers utterly useless, so with a spring he was upon the animal, his hand on his throat.

It was evident that the dog had believed that a growl of dissatisfaction was sufficient to make known to the boy that he could not leave the hotel without paying his bills, and he was taken wholly by surprise in discovering that the biter was bitten.

And badly bitten, too, for Buck was a powerful youth, and his grasp had been like a clasp of iron, and his knife had been so quickly thrust into the side of the dog that the brute was dead in an instant of time. The only noise made had been a scratching upon the floor and a yelp.

Had the landlord been aroused and appeared then in the doorway Buck had it in his heart to kill him, for he felt certain that he had been the accomplice of the dead man, and his blood was up.

But the sounds had not disturbed anyone, and leaving the dog on the sanded floor, he seized his own property unmolested, and unlocked the heavy door and went forth into the pitchy darkness.

Getting his bearings he found the stable, and was disappointed at finding it locked, but his broken knife came into play again, more screws were removed, and the door opened.

Buck was totally unacquainted with the geography of the stable, and in which stall his horse was. There were over a score there, and he dared not call out and have Roan answer him, for fear of rousing the stable boy, whom he heard moving in the loft above.

He therefore had to find his horse by the sense of touch, for it was black as ink, all around him.

Entering the stalls of strange horses without daring to breathe a word to them to quiet their fears, Buck knew was no pleasant work, but he dared not hesitate, and began at the stall nearest him.

His touch frightened the horse, but, patting him, Buck ran his hands over him till he felt he had none of Roan's fine points, and then went to the next stall.

In that was a mule, and one touch was sufficient for the boy to discover that it was sudden death to fool away any time in the immediate locality of that animal, and he quickly made a flank movement to stall number three, where he found, by feeling, a pony.

Next came a very large horse, and he passed on to the fifth stall, and gave a low chuckle, as he felt sure he had found Roan.

The saddle and bridle hung on a stick on one of the stall posts, and these were quickly, though noiselessly, put upon the horse, and the next instant Buck was outside the stable, his rifle at his back, his belt of arms strapped around him, and

mounting, he slowly rode out of the tavern yard though expecting a call or a shot each moment.

But no one seemed to be aroused by the silent departure, and the only sound that reached the boy's ears from within was the clock striking two.

"Four hours to daybreak, and then I guess they'll chase me hot," he muttered, as he set off at an easy gallop.

Knowing the powers and endurance of Roan, Buck felt little anxiety that he would be overtaken, yet he understood woodcraft well enough to cover up his trail when morning came, and seek some hiding-place.

So he kept on his way, slackening up now and then for a short rest, for his horse, and at last day began to dawn, and then to Buck's horror, he saw that he was not mounted on Roan.

It was with the utmost eagerness that Buck waited for good daylight to examine his new horse.

"It is not Roan, and they will pursue me as a horse thief as well as a murderer, and I guess I'll be hanged, for they are hard on horse stealers in these parts.

"But I didn't mean to steal him, and if I take him back they'll string me up for killing that man.

"Guess the fellow who owns him ought to be more pleased with Roan, but I don't know about that, for this is the best horse, for certain, and his four hours' gallop hasn't made him the least tired.

"Hookey! but isn't he a beauty?

"I love old Roan, but I wouldn't give this horse for two of him.

"Come—let me see—I'll have to call you—Mistake—no, I like Stranger best; come, Stranger, if we don't push ahead we won't get a bit better acquainted, and you'll be sorry, for I was awful good to Roan."

The intelligent and really splendid animal seemed to understand the words of his rider, and set off in a long, swinging lope that readily placed twelve miles behind him to the hour.

Pushing on until about eight o'clock, Buck came to a river, which was crossed by a ferryboat, attached to a rope that extended from one bank to the other.

There was a rope to each end of the boat, to answer in the place of a ferryman, so that anyone arriving on the bank and finding the flat on the other side, could pull it across to him.

Buck readily discovered this secret, and soon had the boat across; for it was on the other side, and he led his horse on board.

Pushing on his way after turning the boat adrift to prevent pursuit, Buck left the regular trail, covering up his tracks as best he could, and struck off for home to find it as best he could.

It was the next day before he arrived at the ranch, utterly worn out, as was also his unintentionally stolen horse; but he had the money safe.

He told of his adventures, and the captain of the Texan Rangers, then at the ranch, said:

"Boy, I want you in my command; you are made of the right stuff.

"But as soon as you and your horse are rested, we will go back to the tavern, for I know the landlord, and I guess he won't think you will have to be tried for murder, or even for horse stealing."

Two days after, Buck and several of the ranch cowboys started with the Texas Rangers, and the ferryboat having been found, they crossed the river and reached the tavern.

"See here, Donovan, I have brought that boy back you and a pard tried to rob, and the horse, too."

The man vowed that he didn't know the one Buck had killed, and said that it was a clear case of self-defense, while the horse belonged to the dead man.

"All right, Buck, the horse is ours," said the Ranger captain, and the boy returned, happy, to his home.

With such a training in his boyhood, it was not to be wondered at that Buck Taylor joined the Texas Rangers before he was seventeen, and in time became a lieutenant, the rank won by his pluck on many a hard-fought field.

Going to Nebraska years later, he met Buffalo Bill, and known as the King of the Cowboys, he became a member of the great Wild West Combination under the famous scout, going with it over the United States, then across the ocean to England, France, Russia, Germany, Spain and Italy.

Returning to this country, he went to Texas, and at the



breaking out of the Spanish war, under the then, Lieutenant-Colonel Roosevelt, now President of this great land, started for the front.

Going to Cuba with the Rough Riders, Buck Taylor greatly distinguished himself, and last year, while on a visit to Washington, the splendid-looking fellow, six feet four inches in height, died there suddenly while on a trip out to the resort on the Potomac River known as "Cabin John's Bridge."

### My Adventure with a Negro.

(By Sam Bakritzky, Ga.)

One Saturday night as I was walking along Decatur street I saw a big negro stealing up to where some shoes were hanging and snatching up a pair he started to run.

In an instant the street was in an uproar. Everybody was chasing him—I foremost.

All at once the negro ran into a dark alley where he jumped over a fence. I was running so fast that I either had to jump over the fence or run into it. So I jumped, but no sooner did I jump than I felt myself seized by a pair of strong hands while a voice hissed in my ear:

"Now I'se gwine ter kill yer."

I understood at once that the negro had me. Just then he snatched out a razor from his pocket and raising his hand he was going to strike me, when I managed to yell out for help. He gripped me by my neck.

But just then a fat policeman managed to hear my voice and climbing over the fence he rushed toward the negro. The negro turned around to see who it was, and seeing the policeman he let go of me, and just as I fell in front of him he started to run, but stumbling over me he fell and the policeman, running up, gave him a crack on the head, which settled him. He was marched to the station house and everybody thought me a hero. But let me tell you, kind reader, that I would rather not be a hero than go through such an adventure again.

### LETTERS FROM PRIZE WINNERS.

Here's a letter from a boy who knows what excitement means. He won a prize in the last contest. He shows the sort of stuff that he's made of by his decision to enter the present contest.

QUEHOMO, Kan.

Messrs. Street & Smith—

Gentlemen: I received the prize all O. K., and am pleased with it. I find your publications very interesting. I am going to submit the story of an experience I had on a visit at my grandfather's at Everest, Kansas.

Yours,

ARTHUR JONES.

Glad you like your prize, Art. You are doing good work.

You will find Arthur's story among those printed in the present contest. It's a good one.

Another letter from one of the first prize boys. Read it.

SCRANTON, Pa.

Messrs. Street & Smith—

Gentlemen: I received the sweater you sent as first prize in the recent contest and thank you very much for same. I have been unable to acknowledge it on account of being ill with appendicitis.

Yours respectfully,

March 9, 1901.

C. W. GARIHAN.

We are sorry to hear that you were ill. Hope you will have good health to wear your sweater outdoors after this.

\$1 worth of Tricks & Make-ups sent postpaid for 25 cents stamps or silver. A nice Moustache or full Beard, Irish or Side Whiskers, any color, bottle Spirit Gum to stick them on. Box of Burnt Cork to blacken up. Im. Rubber Mouth, big teeth, secret & apparatus for performing the great vanishing half-dollar trick. This big offer is to get your address to send my large Ill. cat's of plays, wigs, tricks & acts, latest novelties. Mention paper you saw this in and I will also put in a Heavy GOLD plate finger Ring FREE, send size. Address Chas. Marshall, Mfr., Lockport, N.Y.



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(HON. WM. F. CODY)

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